Archie
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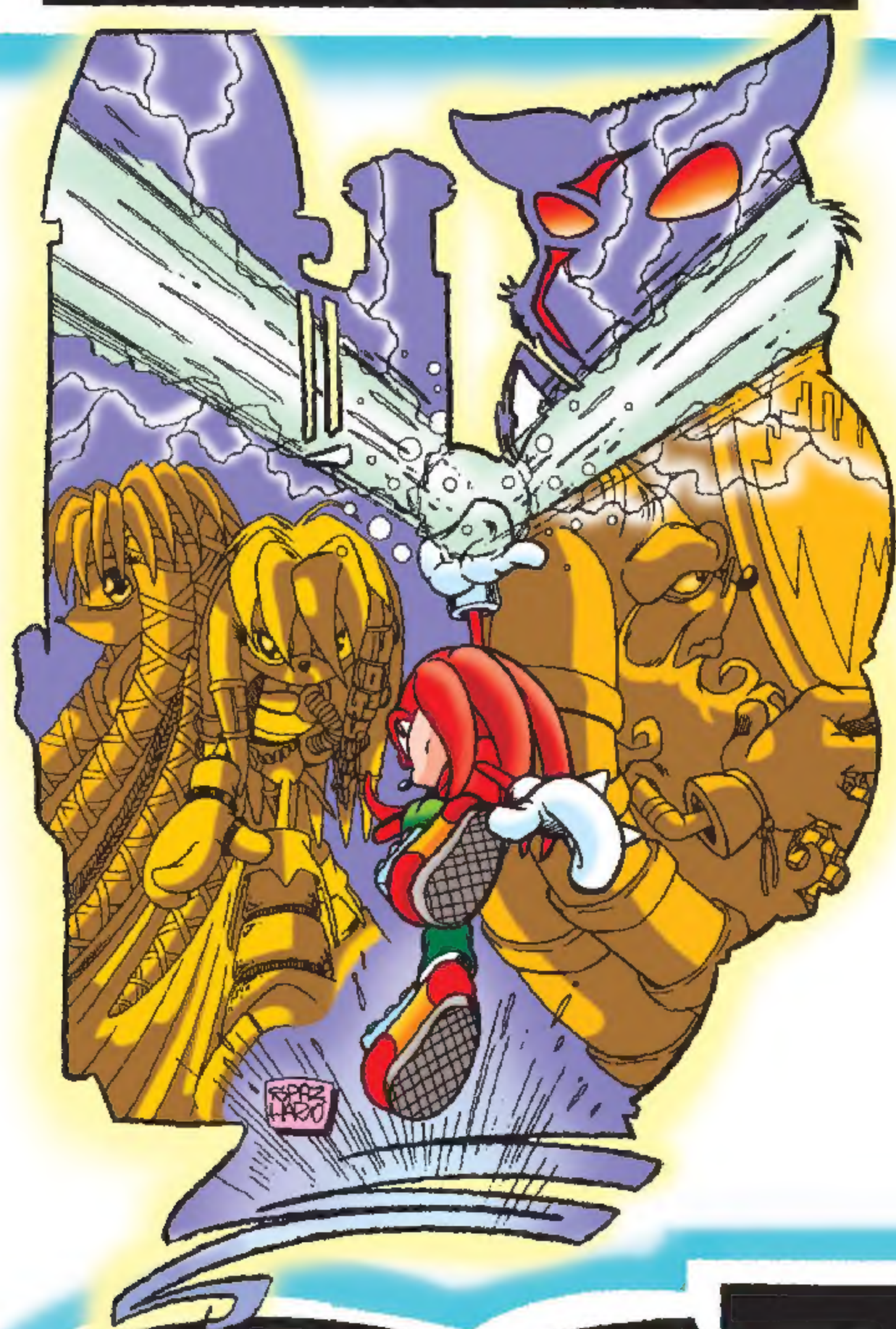
SEGA
KNUCKLES™
THE ECHIDNA
PENDERS • SPAZIANTE • GALAN
GROSSMAN • WILLIAMS • PEPOY

KNUCKLES™ THE ECHIDNA

BOOK SIX



LOST PARADISE

PART THREE OF THREE

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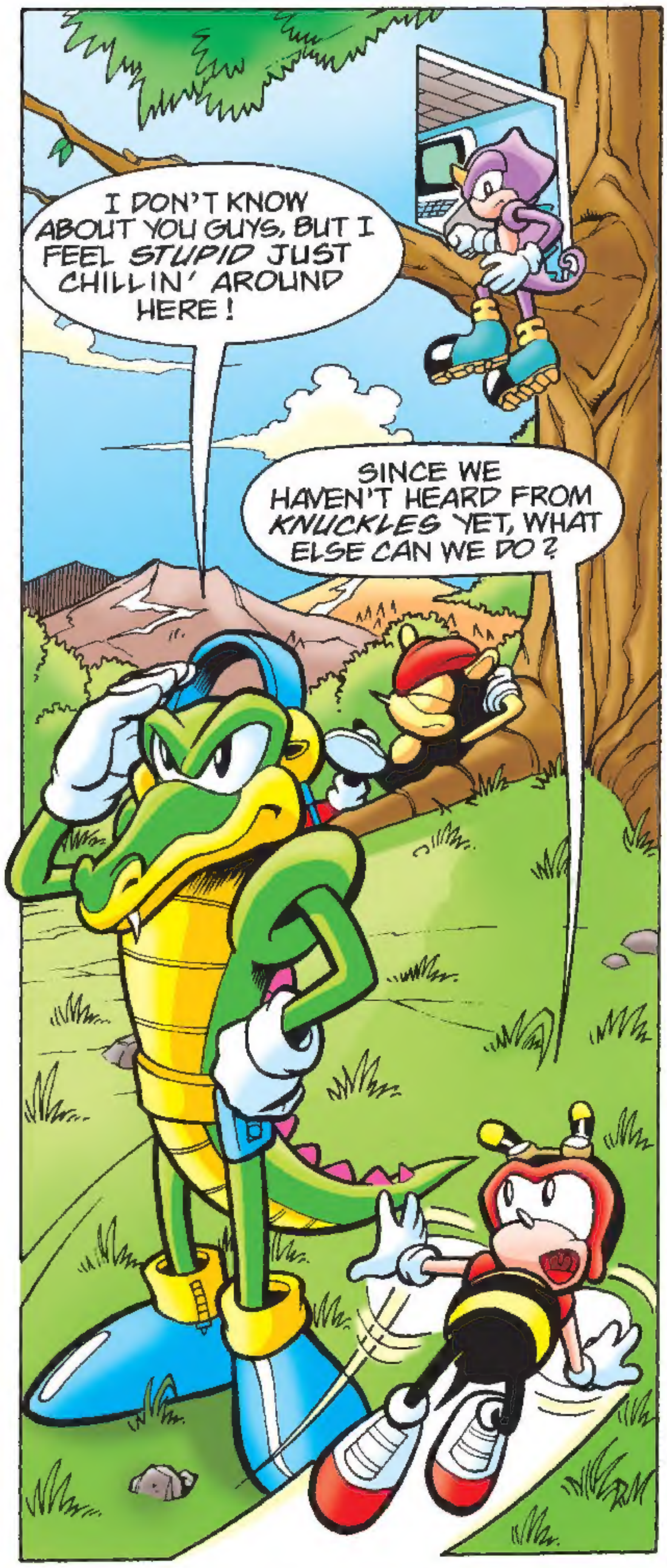
There is no bond stronger than that between a parent and a child. It begins with the first moments of breath, when a newborn infant enters into the world and is dependent upon its parents for its very survival. With the dependency comes unquestioning obedience and love in return.

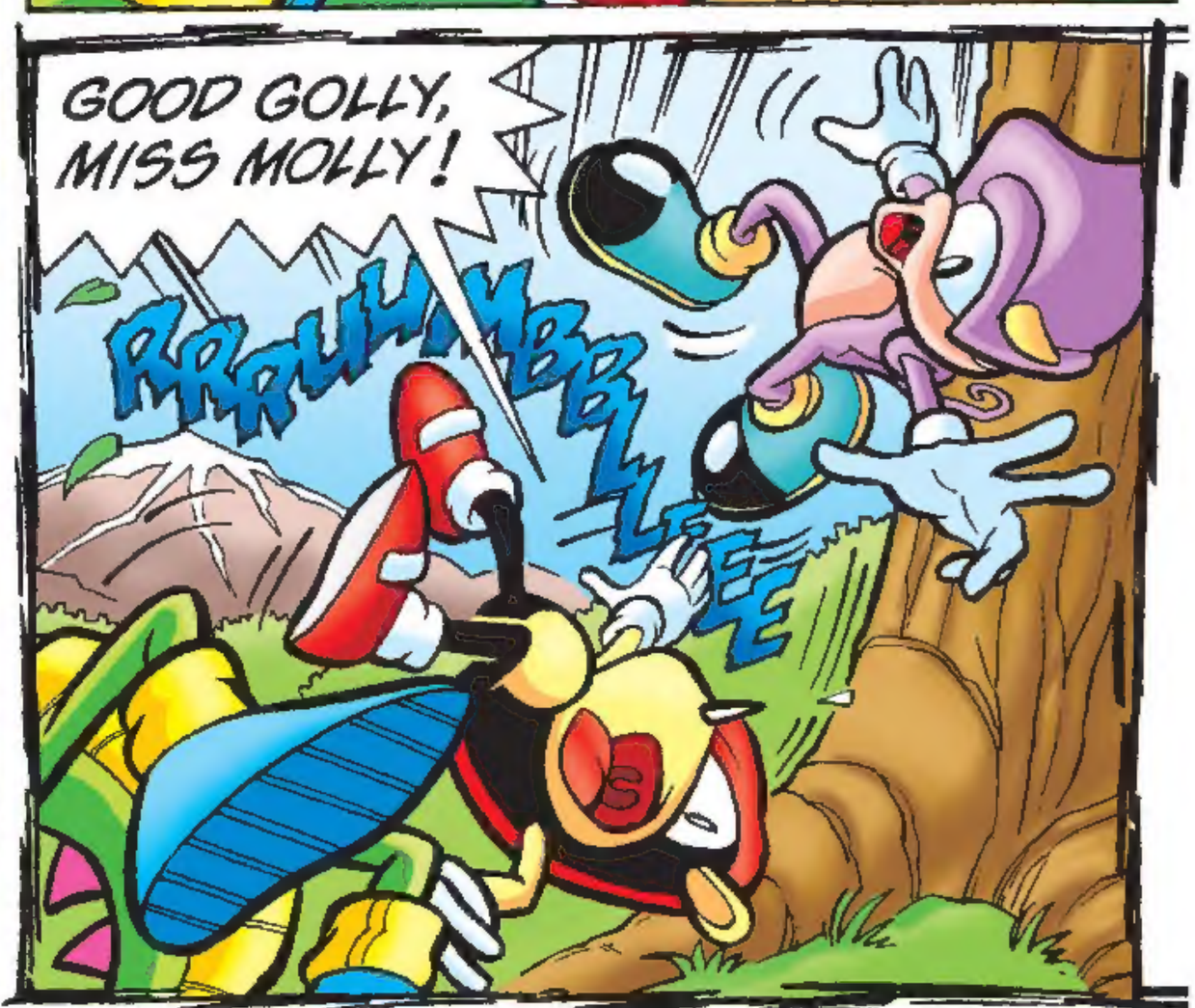
Because the child's fortunes are so linked with whatever befalls the parents, as the child begins to grow and learn about his surroundings, he, at first, accepts much of what he sees as the absolute truth. It is only when the child begins to develop the capacity to see behind the so-called truths, that he begins to seek the real answers.

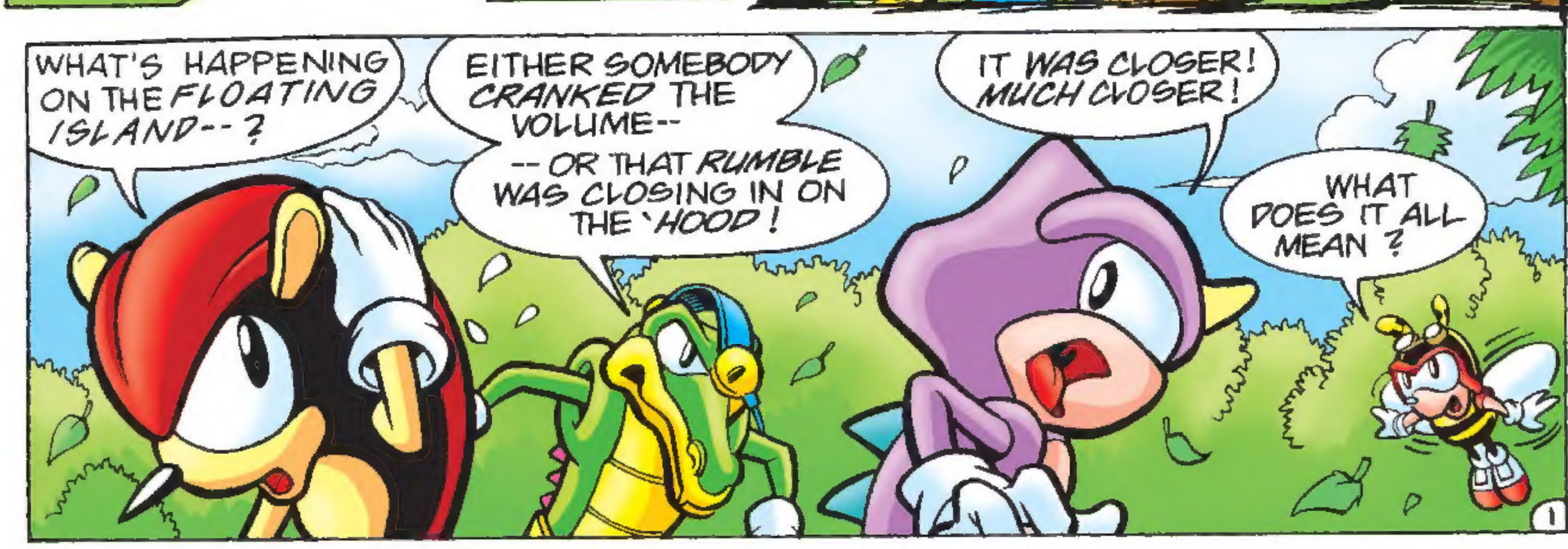
Knuckles has begun to question that which he has learned and experienced. Beyond the question, though, is one simple basic truth that stands before all else. No matter what has gone on before, he loves his parents above all else, even if he doesn't understand their estranged relationship.

With his mother now in harm's way, Knuckles is ready to do what any son would do, even at the cost of his own life...


I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU GUYS, BUT I FEEL *STUPID* JUST CHILLIN' AROUND HERE!
SINCE WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM *KNUCKLES* YET, WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

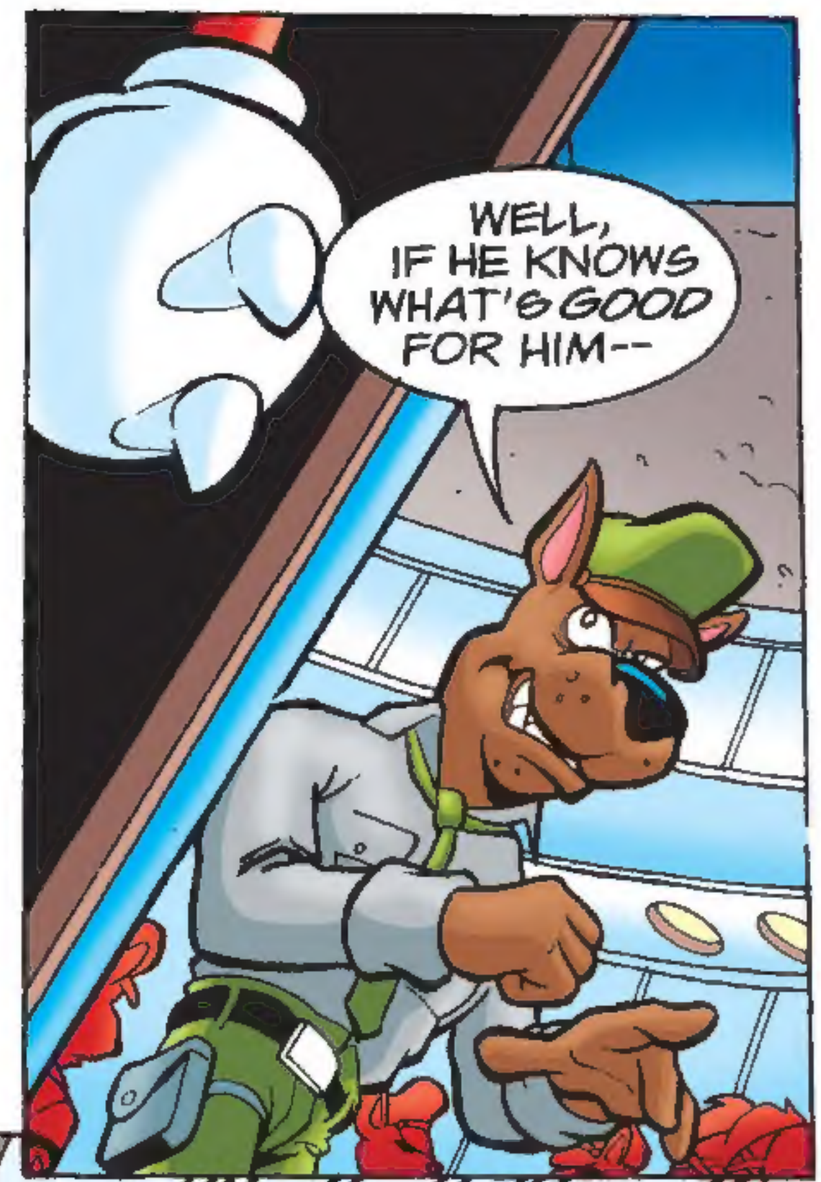
YOU KNOW HE'S *DEPENDING* ON US TO HOLD DOWN THE FORT UNTIL HE GETS BACK!
IF HE GETS BACK!
I THINK KNUX IS BEING SNOWED BY THAT *WITCH* HE'S WITH!


GOOD GOLLY, MISS MOLLY!
RRRUH, BBL, EE


WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE *FLOATING ISLAND*--?
EITHER SOMEBODY *CRANKED* THE VOLUME--
--OR THAT *RUMBLE* WAS CLOSING IN ON THE '*HOOD*!
IT *WAS* CLOSER! *MUCH* CLOSER!
WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

"I DON'T KNOW, BUT I'D LAY ODDS KNUCKLES DOES."
BAM!
ALRIGHT! TIME TO KICK SOME DINGO BU--
PATIENCE! LET THEM COME TO US!
WHILE THOSE DONKEYS DOWNSTAIRS THINK WE'RE NEGOTIATING OVER THE HOSTAGES, LET'S GET READY TO MOVE OUT!
YES, SIR!
WAITAMINUTE!
I THINK I HEARD SOMETHING!
ZERO HOUR... AND COUNTING

SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE'S IN THERE!
GO CHECK IT OUT, JASPER!
THE LAST THING WE NEED NOW IS SOME JERK WHO THINKS HE'S A HERO!


WELL, IF HE KNOWS WHAT'S GOOD FOR HIM--

JASPER!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
BIFF!
BAM!
POW
ZOWIE!

WHUMP!
WOOF!

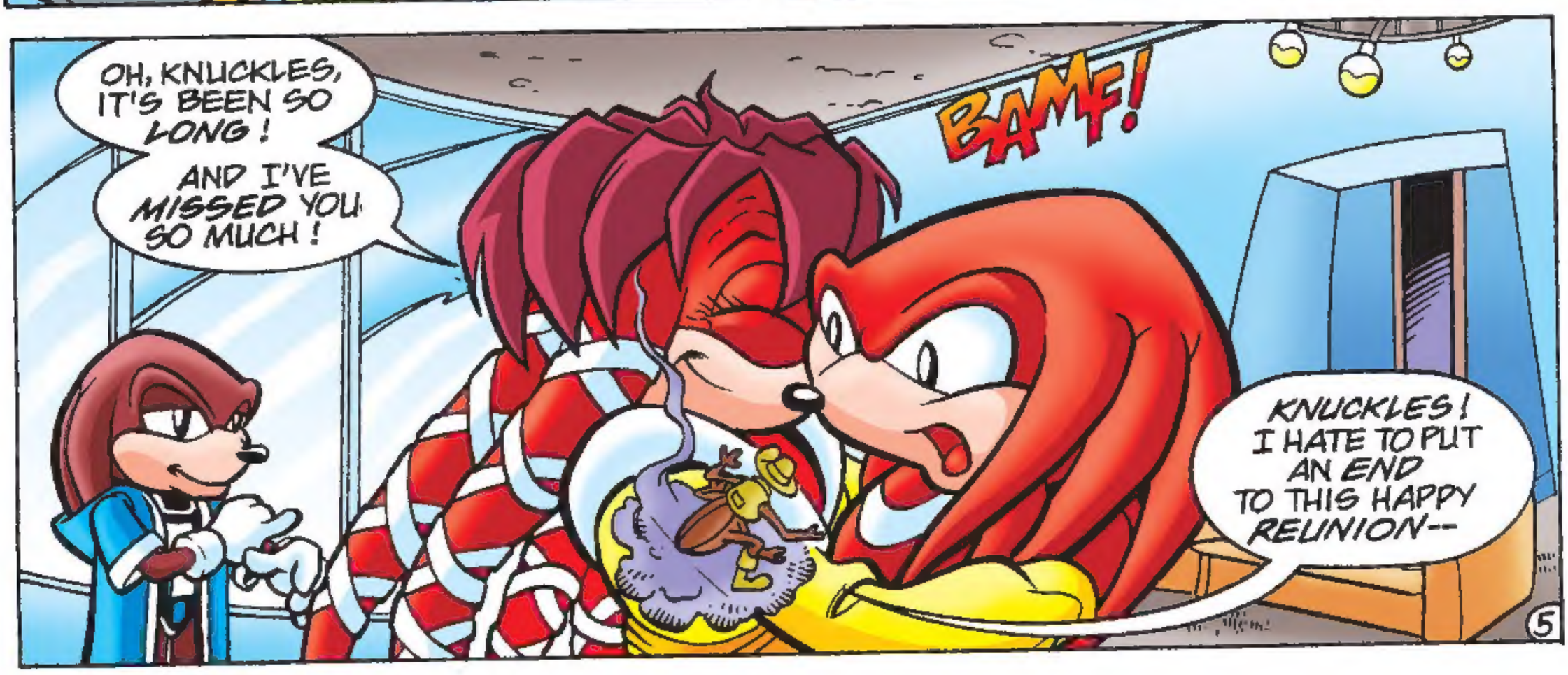
AND IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU, BUB--
YOU'LL QUIT NOW BEFORE THINGS REALLY GET MEAN!
ARROGANT SWINE!

NOT SWINE--ECHIDNA!
THERE'S NOT AN OUNCE OF PORK IN THIS BOD!
WHAAM!
OWWOOF!

NOW PAY ATTENTION, SON--
--AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE AT MY OL' ALMA MATA!
BAAM!

DON'T YOU KNOW THESE GUYS ARE FROM THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS?
THEY WOULDN'T KNOW HIGHER EDUCATION IF IT BIT THEM!
SLAAM!

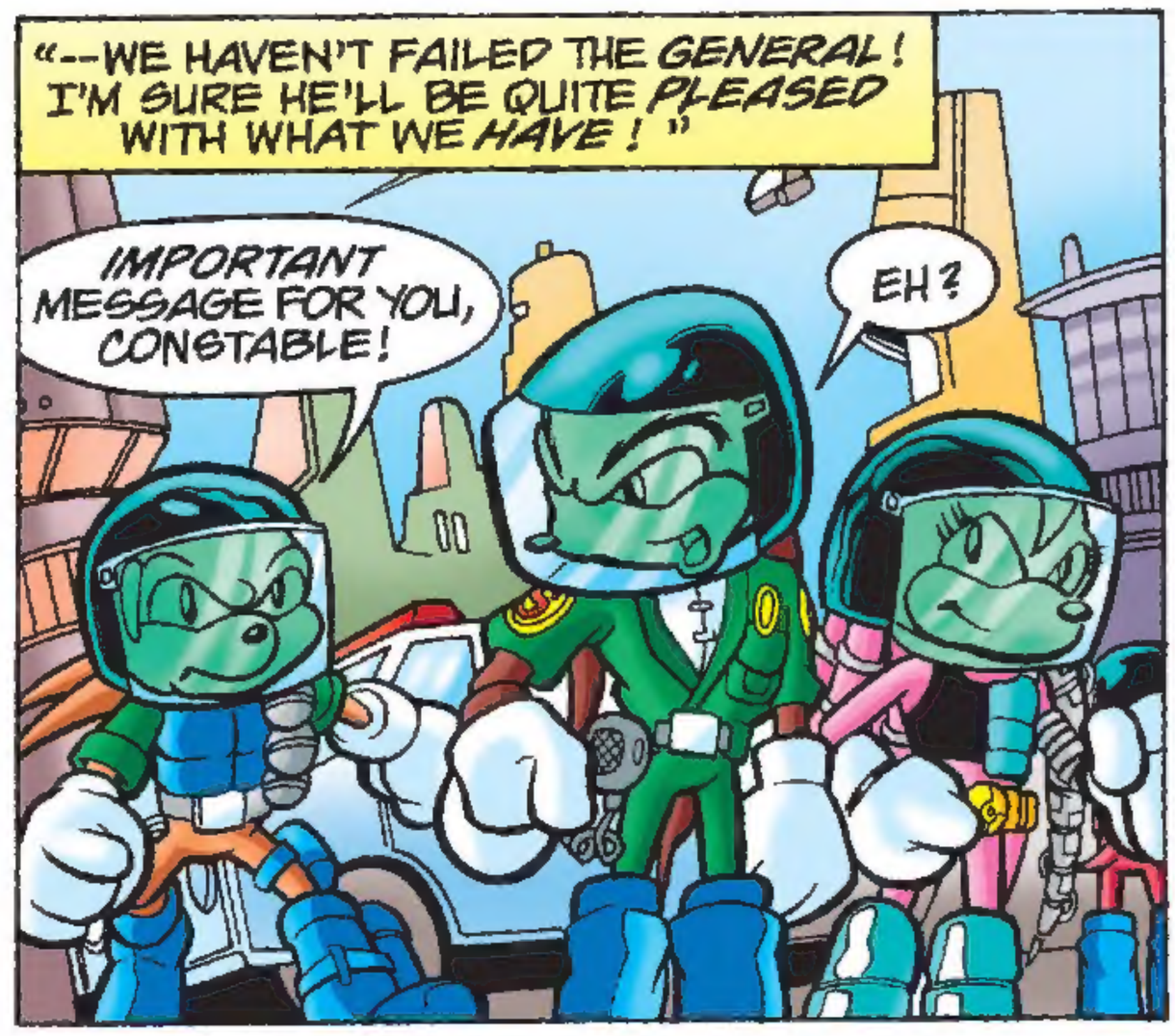
NICE TACKLE!
I PLAYED VARSITY!
KNUCKLES! WYNMACHER! ARE YOU TWO ALRIGHT?

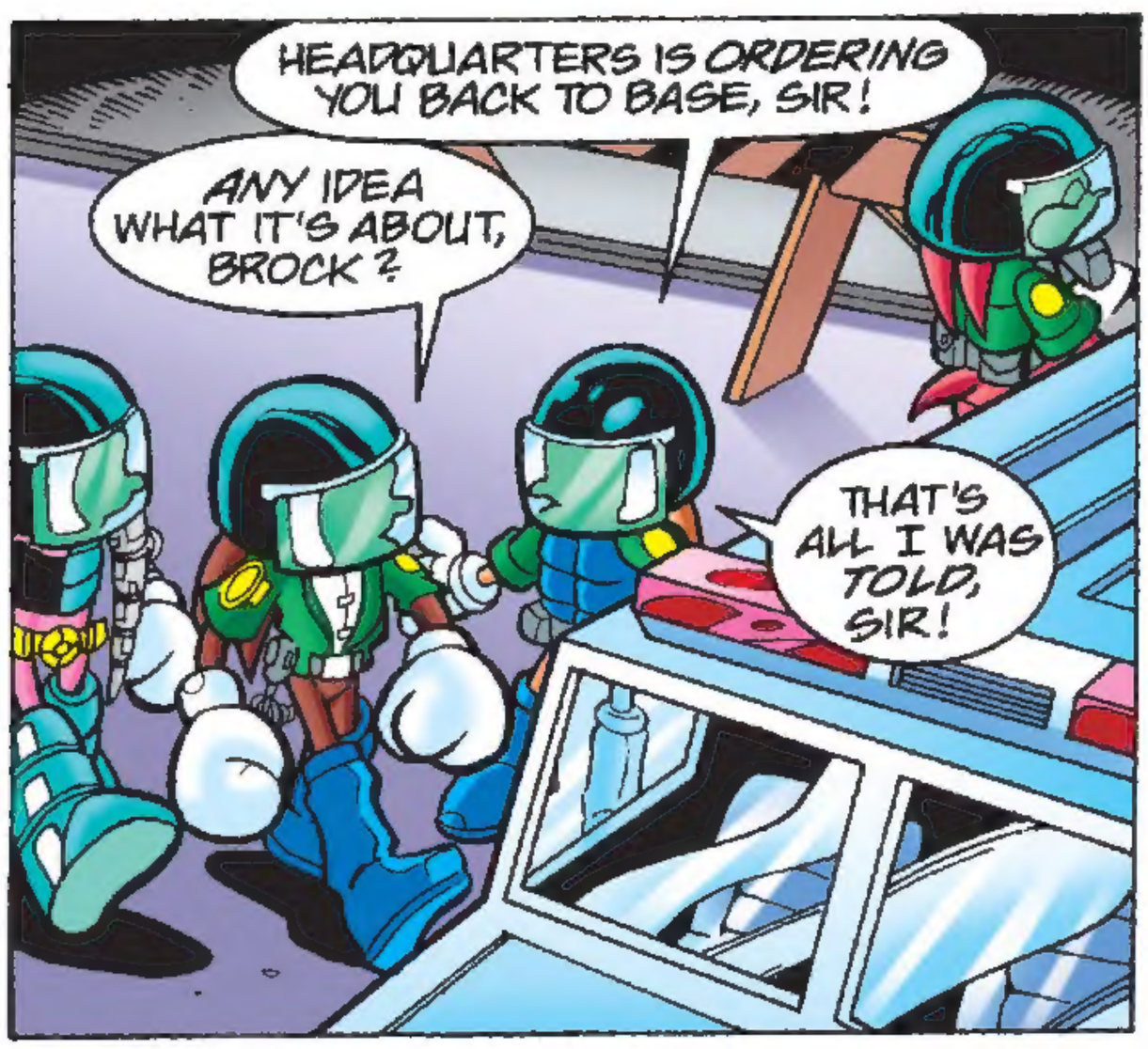

OH, KNUCKLES, IT'S BEEN SO LONG!
AND I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH!
BAMF!
KNUCKLES! I HATE TO PUT AN END TO THIS HAPPY REUNION--

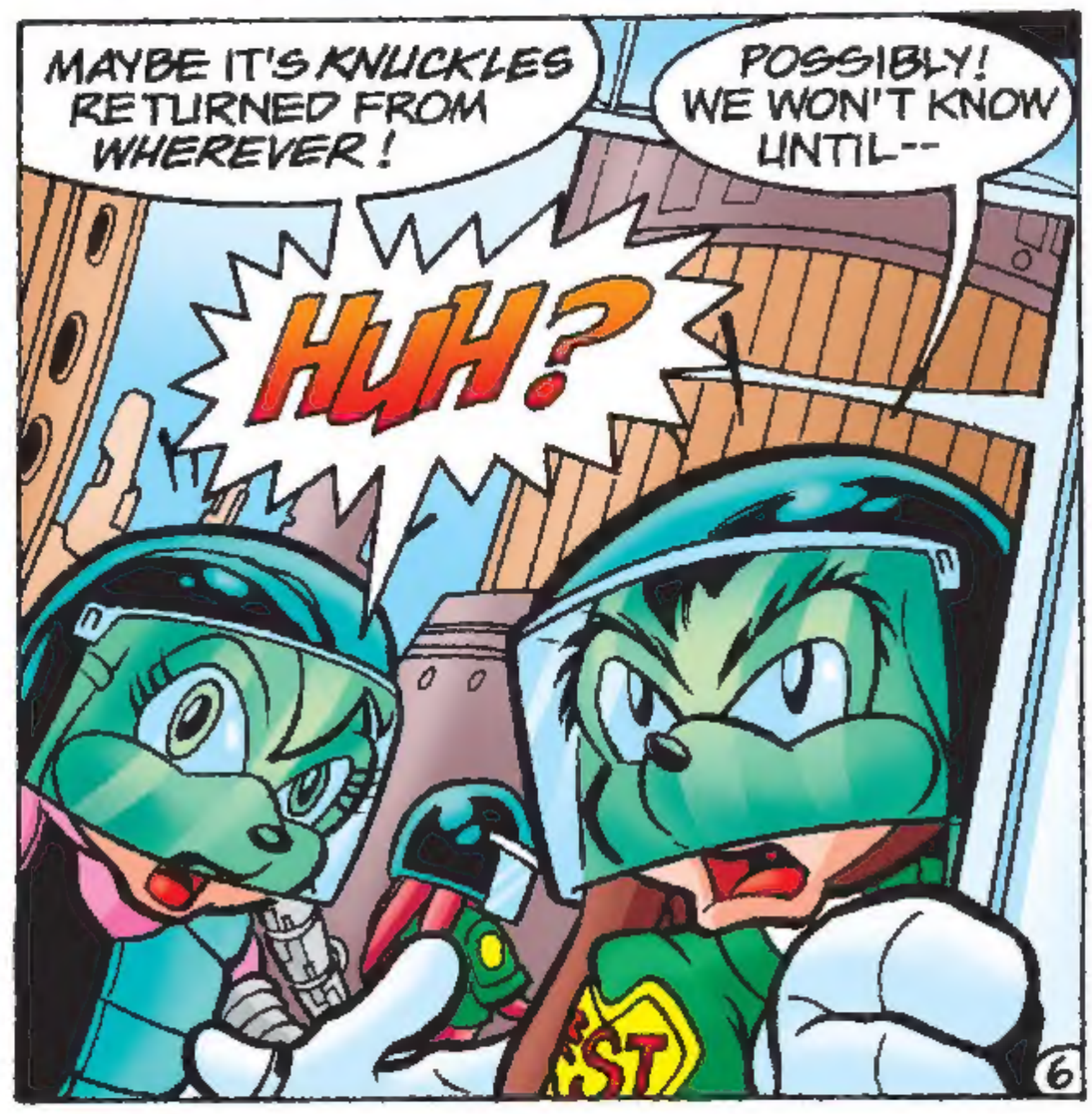
"--BUT WE'VE GOT COMPANY COMING, AND I DON'T THINK THEY PARTICULARLY LIKE US!"
DOWN THIS WAY, TROOPS!
SOUNDS LIKE THE SQUADRON COMMANDER HAS HIS HANDS FULL!

WE'RE TOO LATE!
CHECK ALL THE ROOMS! WHOEVER DID THIS HAS TO BE HERE!

WAIT!
NOT TO WORRY, VERMIN--
WE'RE FADING OUT!


"--WE HAVEN'T FAILED THE GENERAL! I'M SURE HE'LL BE QUITE PLEASED WITH WHAT WE HAVE!"
IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR YOU, CONSTABLE!
EH?

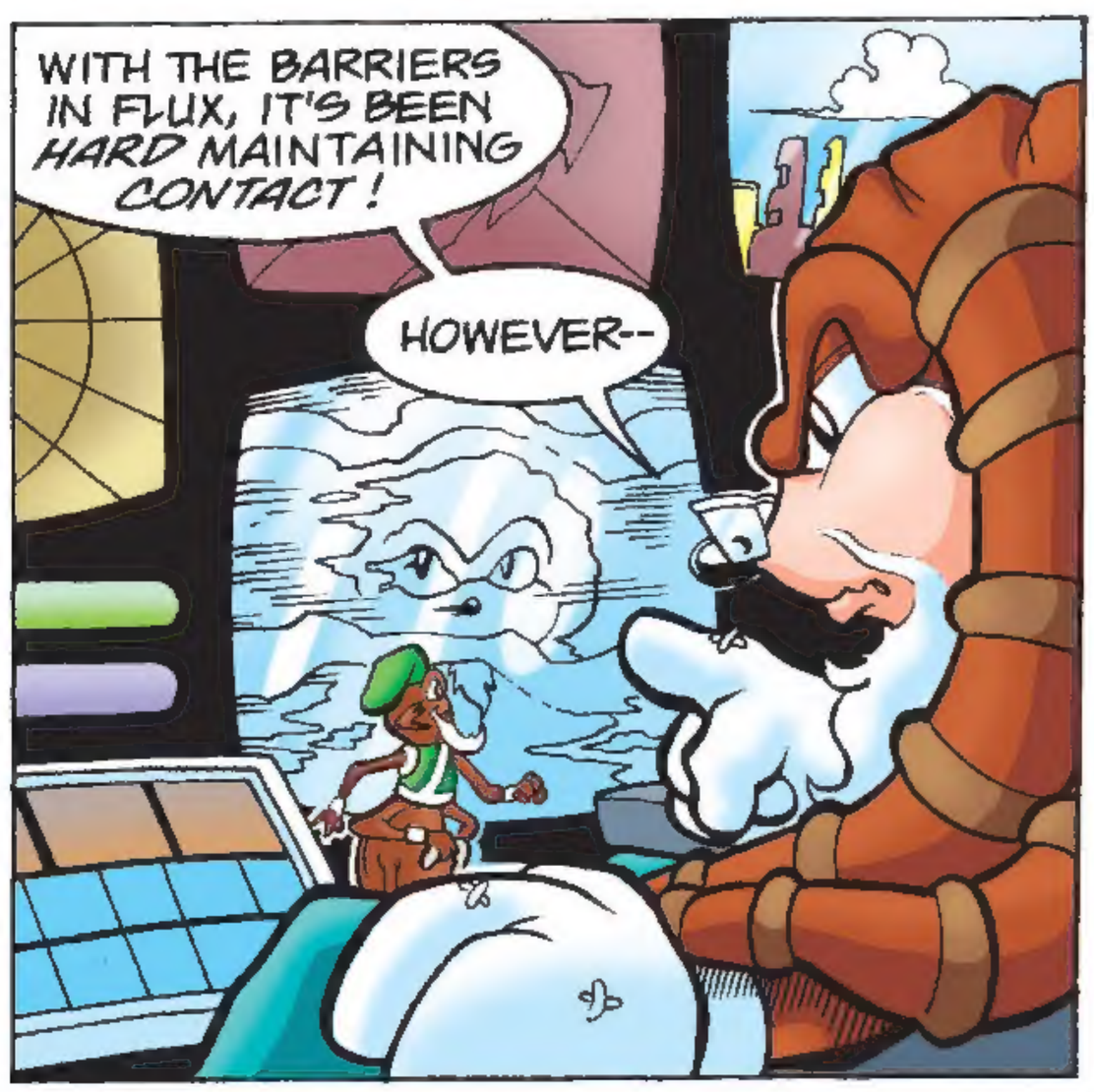

HEADQUARTERS IS ORDERING YOU BACK TO BASE, SIR!
ANY IDEA WHAT IT'S ABOUT, BROCK?
THAT'S ALL I WAS TOLD, SIR!


MAYBE IT'S KNUCKLES RETURNED FROM WHEREVER!
POSSIBLY! WE WON'T KNOW UNTIL--
HUH?

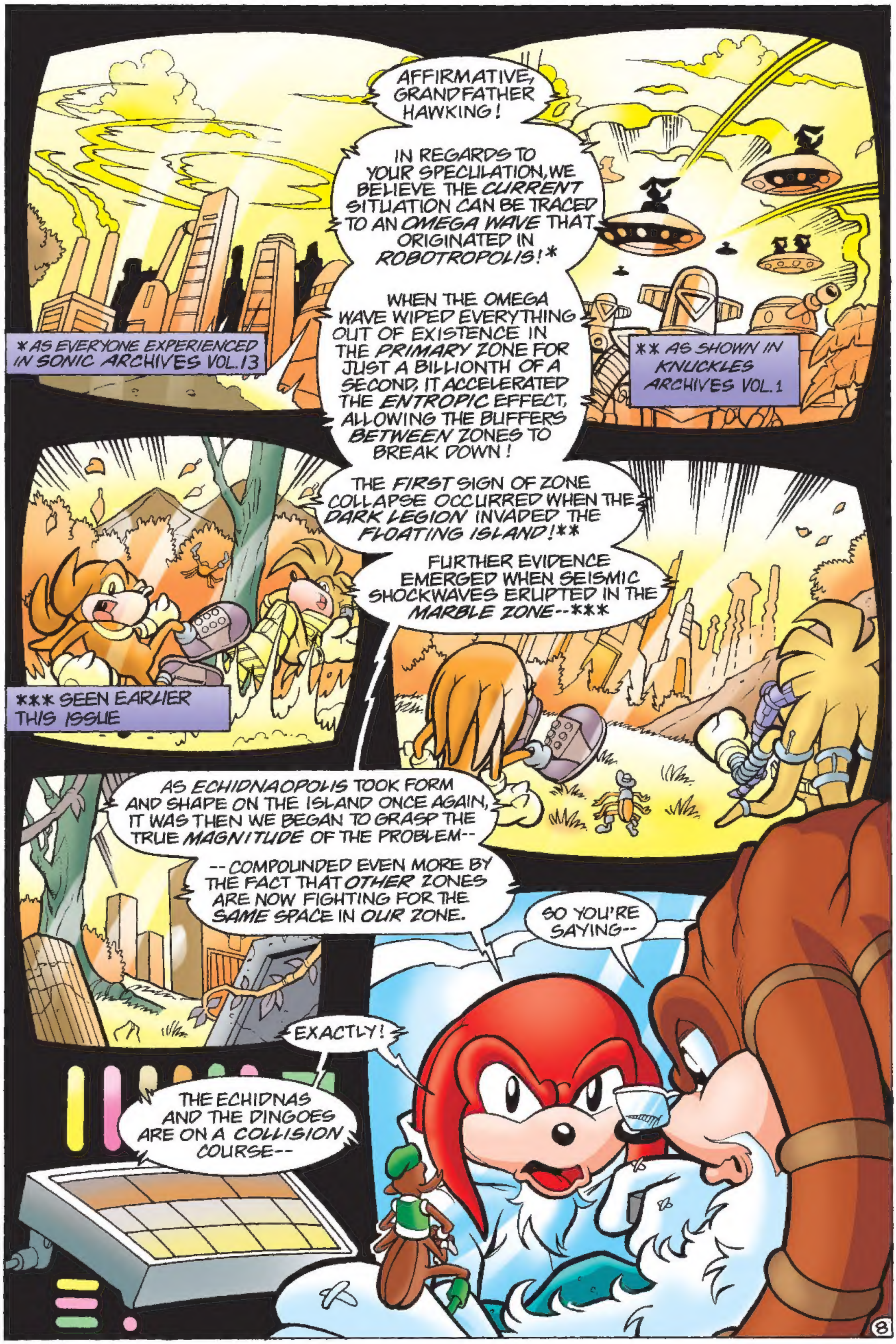
"HOW DID YOU GET HERE?"
THIS LOOKS BAD!
VERY BAD, INDEED!

WHAT LOOKS BAD, OLD FRIEND?
DEO! I'M GLAD YOU'VE COME!
AN INFORMED OPINION WOULD BE MOST WELCOME!
BAMF!

I'M AFRAID I'VE BLAMED THE WRONG PARTY FOR THESE DISTURBANCES!
THE DINGOES HAVE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ENERGY FLUCTUATIONS THAT ARE BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS BETWEEN THE HYPER ZONES!
THEN, WHO OR WHAT IS THE CAUSE, HAWKING?
I BELIEVE HAVEN HAS THE ANSWERS I SEEK!


WITH THE BARRIERS IN FLUX, IT'S BEEN HARD MAINTAINING CONTACT!
HOWEVER--

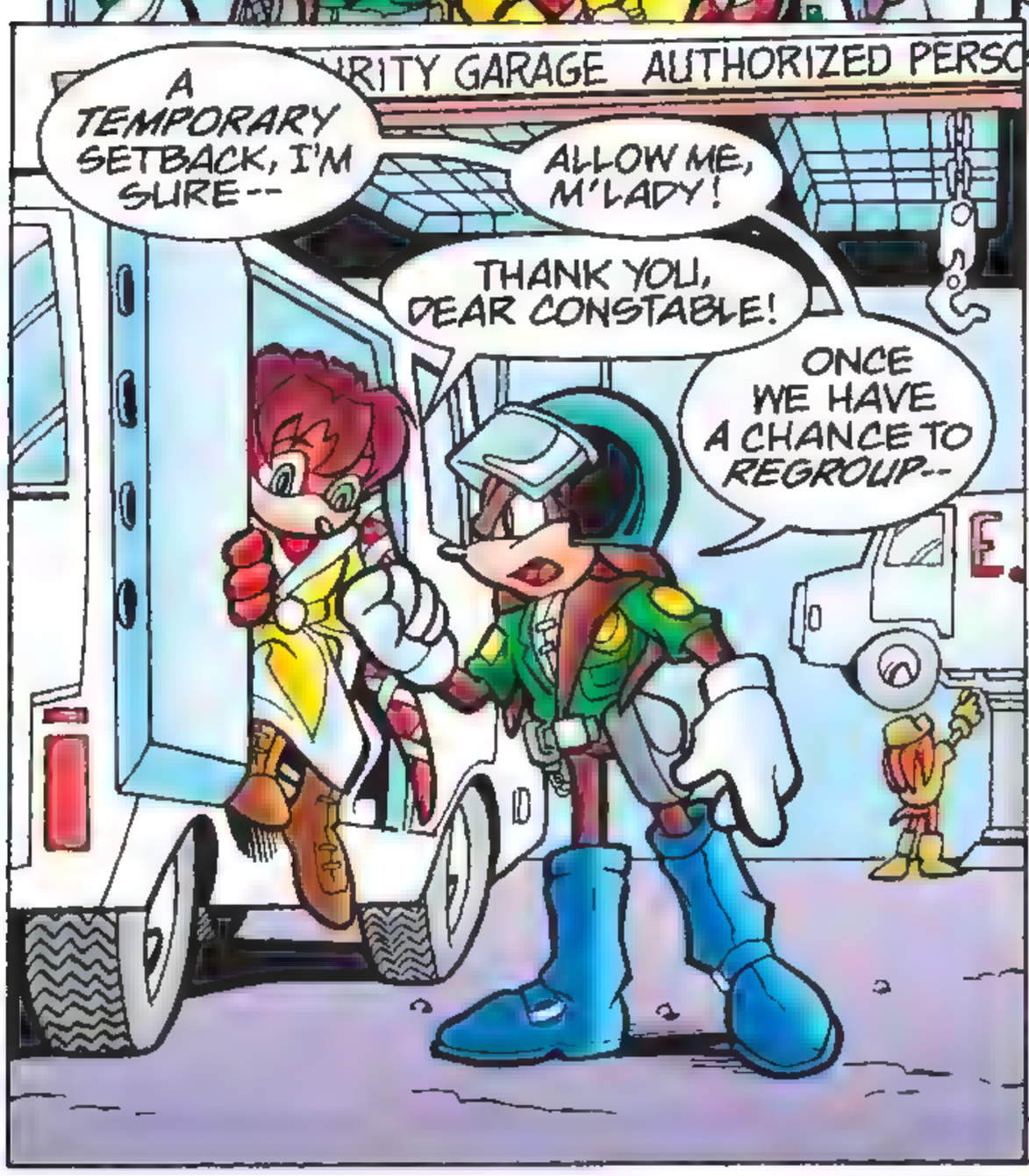
...ZZZ... READ ME? OVER!
AH, THERE YOU ARE, LOCKE!
DID YOU RECEIVE MY EARLIER TRANS-MISSION?

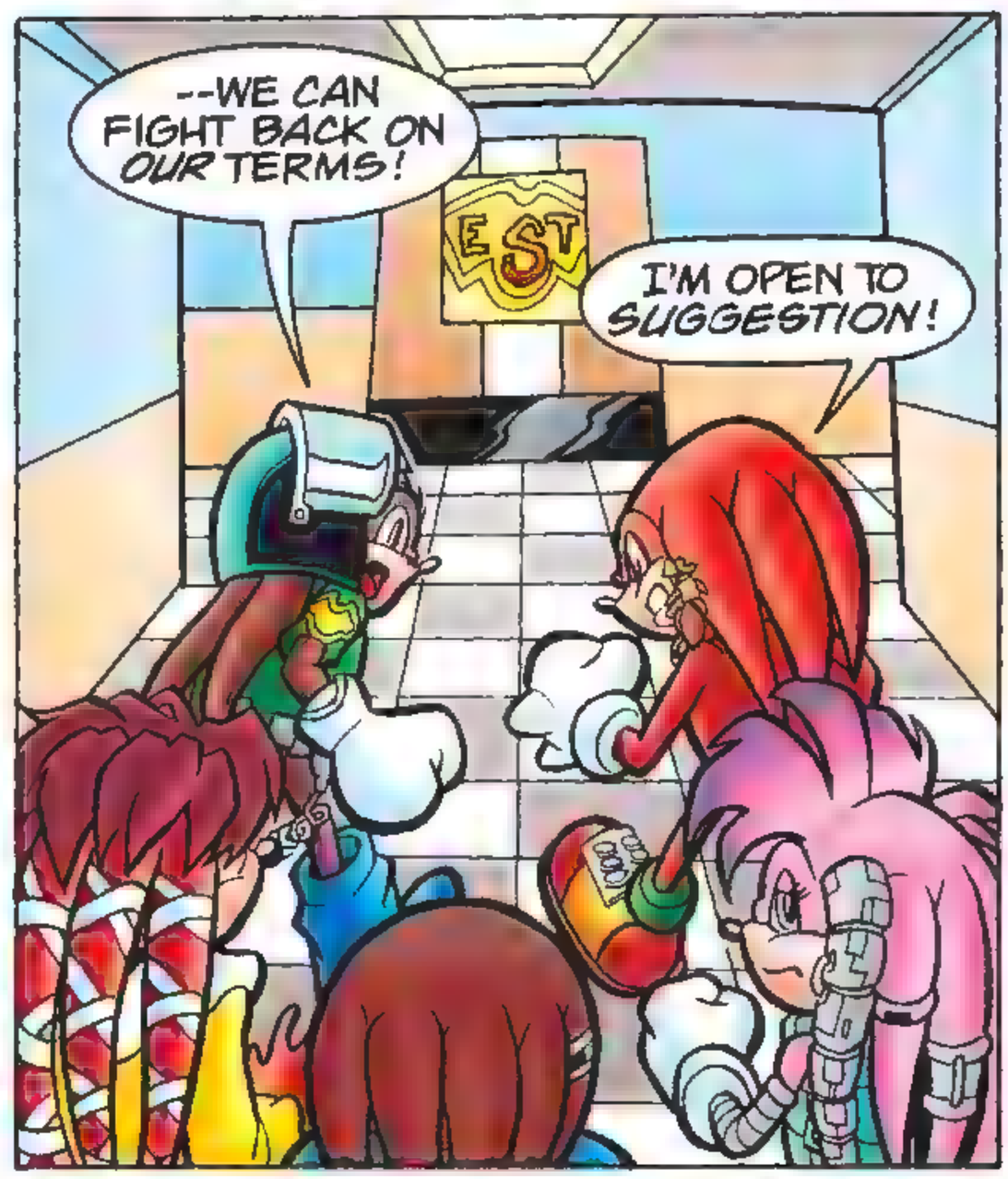

AFFIRMATIVE, GRANDFATHER HAWKING!
IN REGARDS TO YOUR SPECULATION, WE BELIEVE THE CURRENT SITUATION CAN BE TRACED TO AN OMEGA WAVE THAT ORIGINATED IN ROBOTROPOLIS!*
WHEN THE OMEGA WAVE WIPED EVERYTHING OUT OF EXISTENCE IN THE PRIMARY ZONE FOR JUST A BILLIONTH OF A SECOND, IT ACCELERATED THE ENTROPIC EFFECT, ALLOWING THE BUFFERS BETWEEN ZONES TO BREAK DOWN!
* AS EVERYONE EXPERIENCED IN SONIC ARCHIVES VOL.13
** AS SHOWN IN KNUCKLES ARCHIVES VOL.1
THE FIRST SIGN OF ZONE COLLAPSE OCCURRED WHEN THE DARK LEGION INVADED THE FLOATING ISLAND!**
FURTHER EVIDENCE EMERGED WHEN SEISMIC SHOCKWAVES ERUPTED IN THE MARBLE ZONE--***
*** SEEN EARLIER THIS ISSUE
AS ECHIDNAOPOLIS TOOK FORM AND SHAPE ON THE ISLAND ONCE AGAIN, IT WAS THEN WE BEGAN TO GRASP THE TRUE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM--
--COMPOUNDED EVEN MORE BY THE FACT THAT OTHER ZONES ARE NOW FIGHTING FOR THE SAME SPACE IN OUR ZONE.
SO YOU'RE SAYING--
EXACTLY!
THE ECHIDNAS AND THE DINGOES ARE ON A COLLISION COURSE--

"... AND ONLY *ONE* CAN SURVIVE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE *OTHER*!"

THAT WAS *PRUDENT* ON YOUR PART TO GET *LADY LARA-LE* TO SAFETY, GUARDIAN!

YEAH, BUT WE *WEREN'T* ABLE TO SAVE THE OTHERS!





THAT'S HIS WAY!

YOU HAVEN'T SAID MUCH TO *ME*, KNUCKLES!

WHAT DO I SAY? WHERE DO I *START*?

YOU COULD START BY *ACKNOWLEDGING* YOUR *MOTHER*--

AFTER ALL, THAT'S WHAT I WAS WHEN YOU CAME INTO THE WORLD! I THOUGHT THE *FUTURE* HELD NOTHING BUT *JOY* AND *WONDER* AS YOU LAY IN MY ARMS!

I HAD NOT *COMPREHENDED* WHAT IT MEANT TO BE THE *WIFE* OF A *GUARDIAN* JUST YET.

"ALTHOUGH I KNEW YOUR DESTINY *BEFORE* YOU WERE EVEN BORN, I BELIEVED I WOULD HAVE A SAY IN YOUR *UPBRINGING*--

--AND WHEN I DIDN'T, IT WAS THEN I REALIZED I COULD EITHER *ACCEPT* IT--

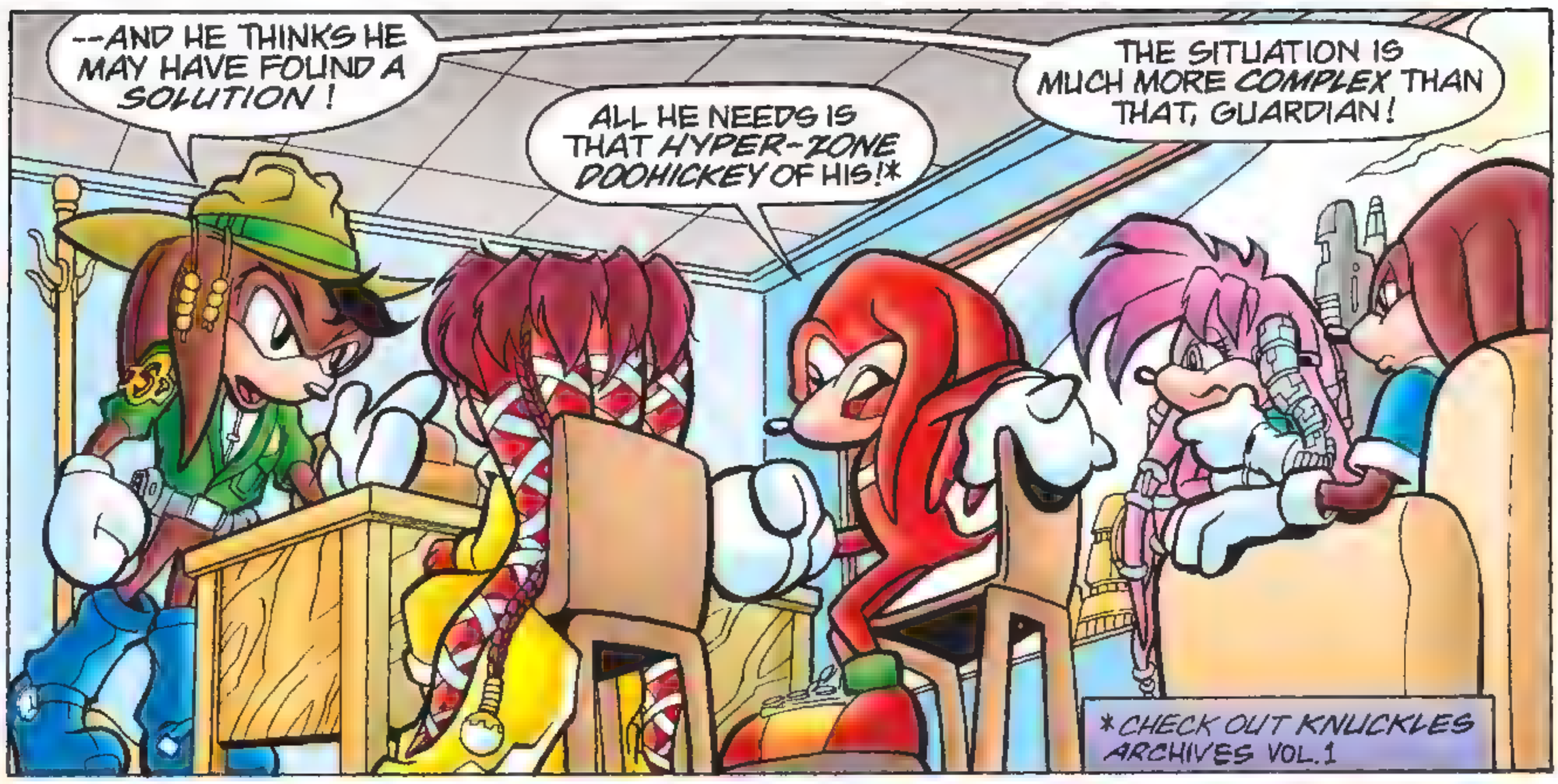
--OR *WALK* AWAY!

WEREN'T THERE *ANY* OTHER *OPTIONS*? I MEAN--

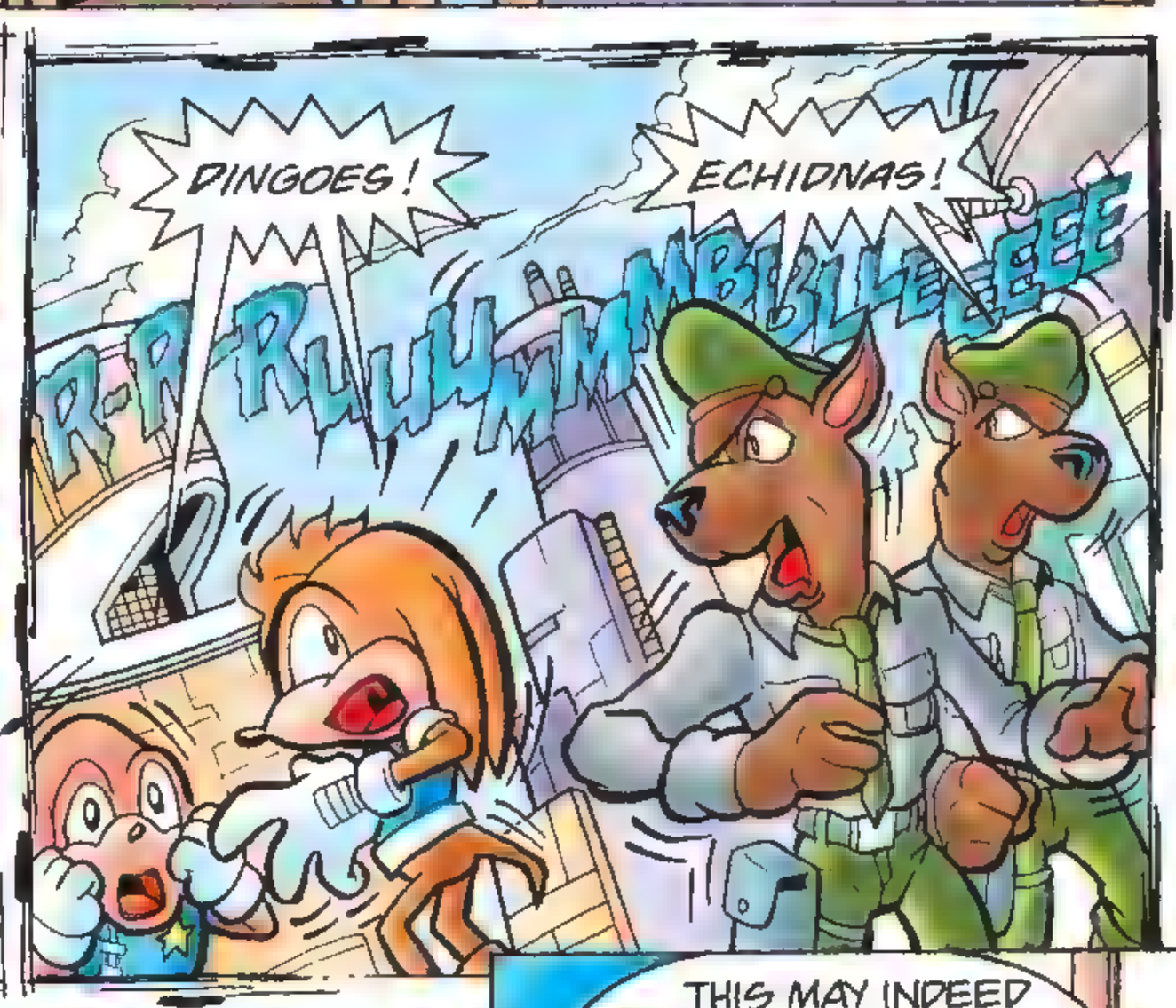
IF YOUR *BLOODLINES* WERE MORE *TRADITIONAL*, PERHAPS!

AND THEY MOST *CERTAINLY* ARE ANYTHING BUT!

I'VE JUST RECEIVED WORD FROM *GUARDIAN* *HAWKING*--

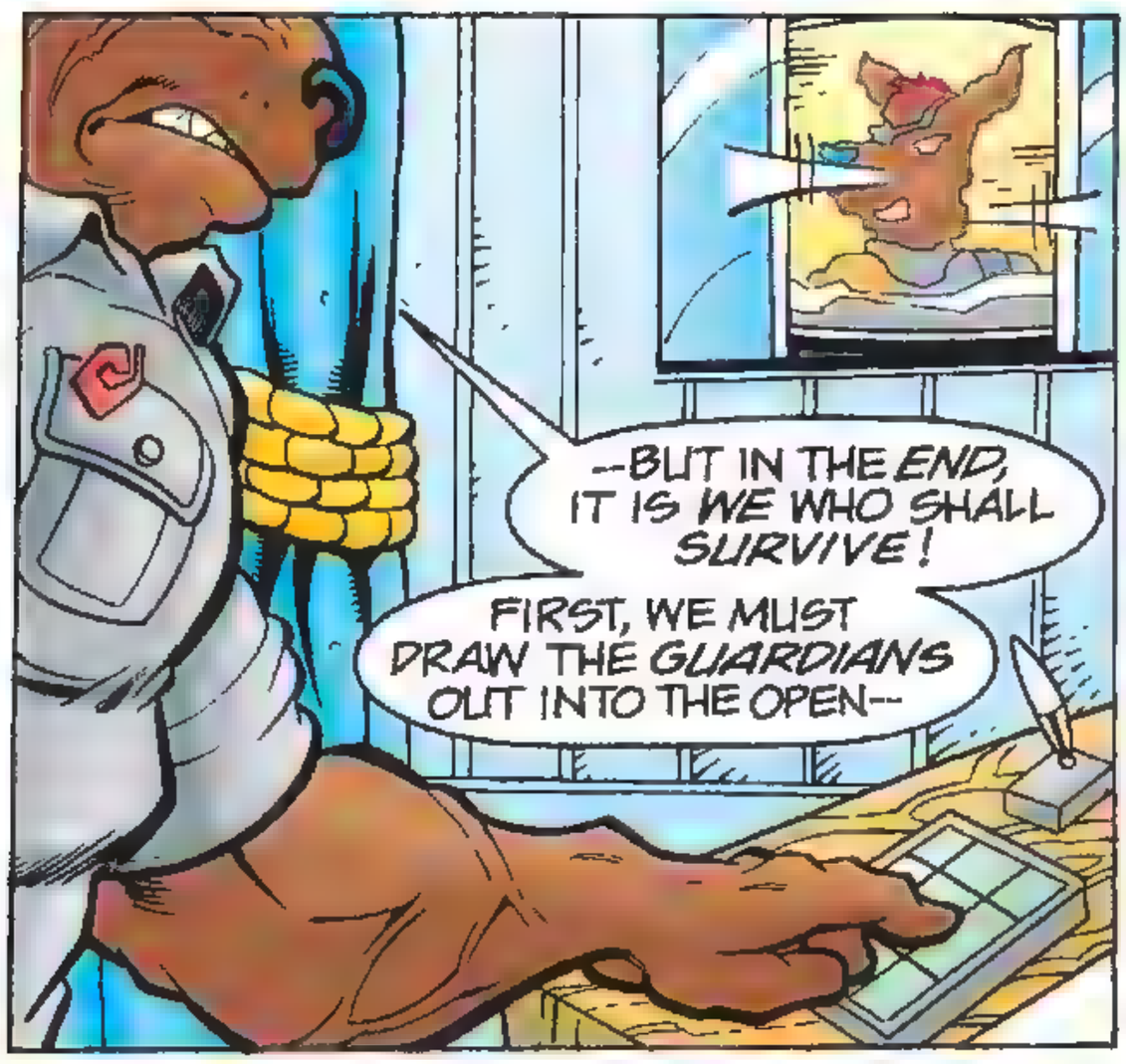

--AND HE THINKS HE MAY HAVE FOUND A SOLUTION!
ALL HE NEEDS IS THAT HYPER-ZONE DOOHICKEY OF HIS!*
THE SITUATION IS MUCH MORE COMPLEX THAN THAT, GUARDIAN!
*CHECK OUT KNUCKLES ARCHIVES VOL.1

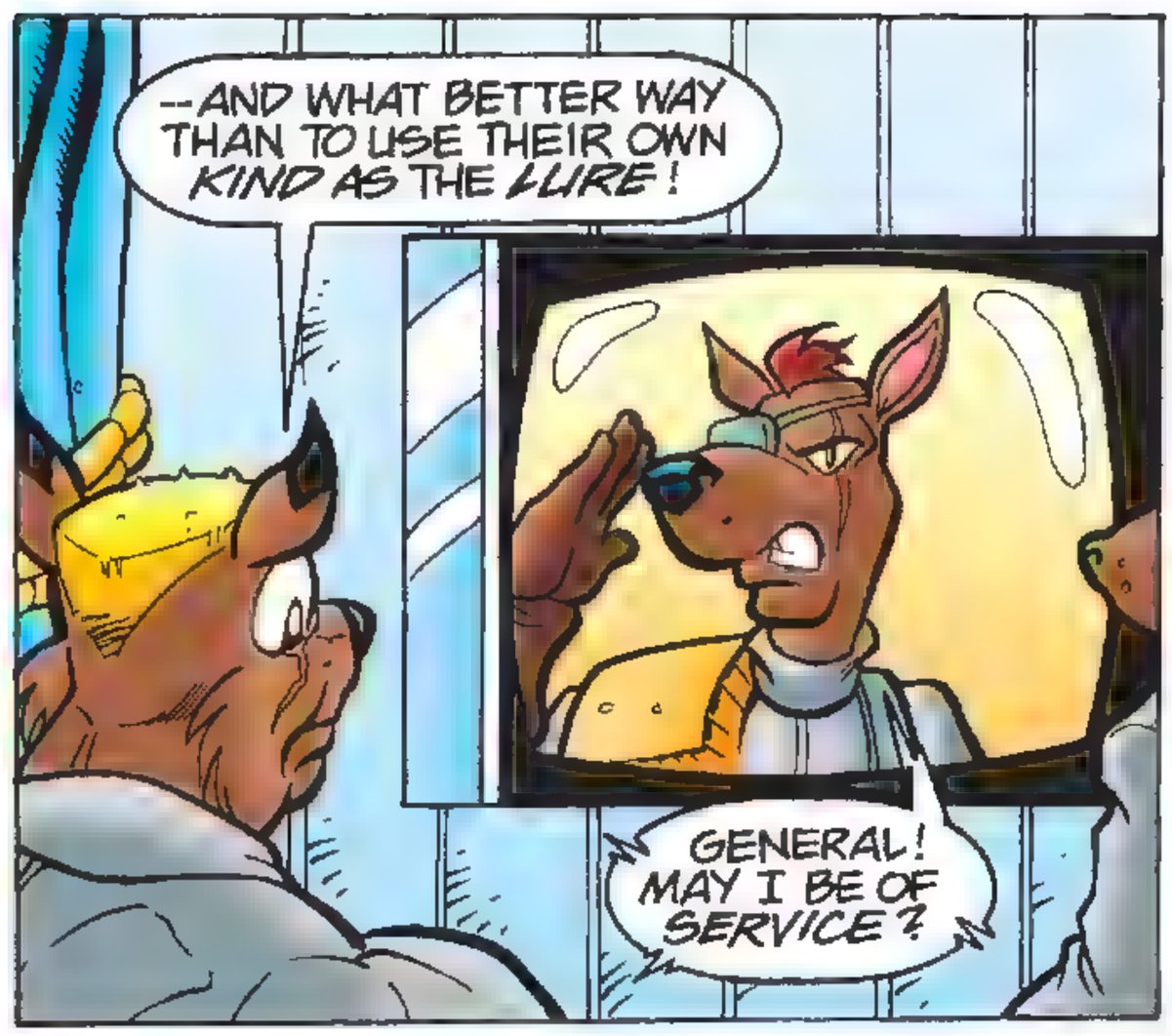
THAT'S ONLY PART OF THE EQUATION!
I STILL HAVE A CITIZENRY TO GET TO SAF--
WHOA!
RRRUUUMMMBLLEEE

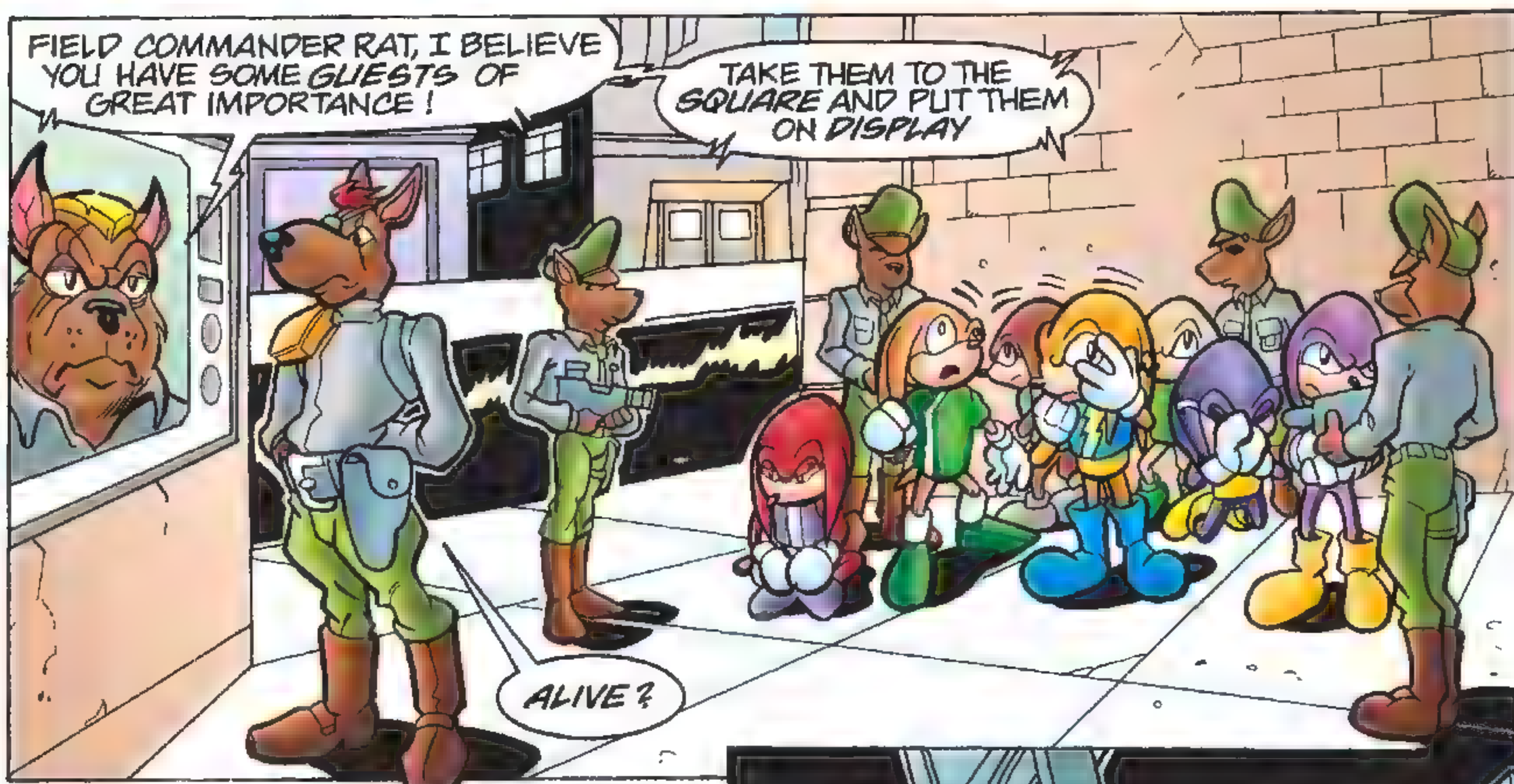

DINGOES!
ECHIDNAS!
R-R-RUUUMMMBLLEEE

GENERAL!
IT IS THE APOCALYPSE! WE ARE DOOMED!
GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, GERBIL!
STRYKER

THIS MAY INDEED BE THE FINAL ACT OF AN ONGOING STRUGGLE BETWEEN OUR PEOPLE AND THE ACCURSED ECHIDNAS--


--BUT IN THE END, IT IS WE WHO SHALL SURVIVE!
FIRST, WE MUST DRAW THE GUARDIANS OUT INTO THE OPEN--


--AND WHAT BETTER WAY THAN TO USE THEIR OWN KIND AS THE LURE!
GENERAL! MAY I BE OF SERVICE?

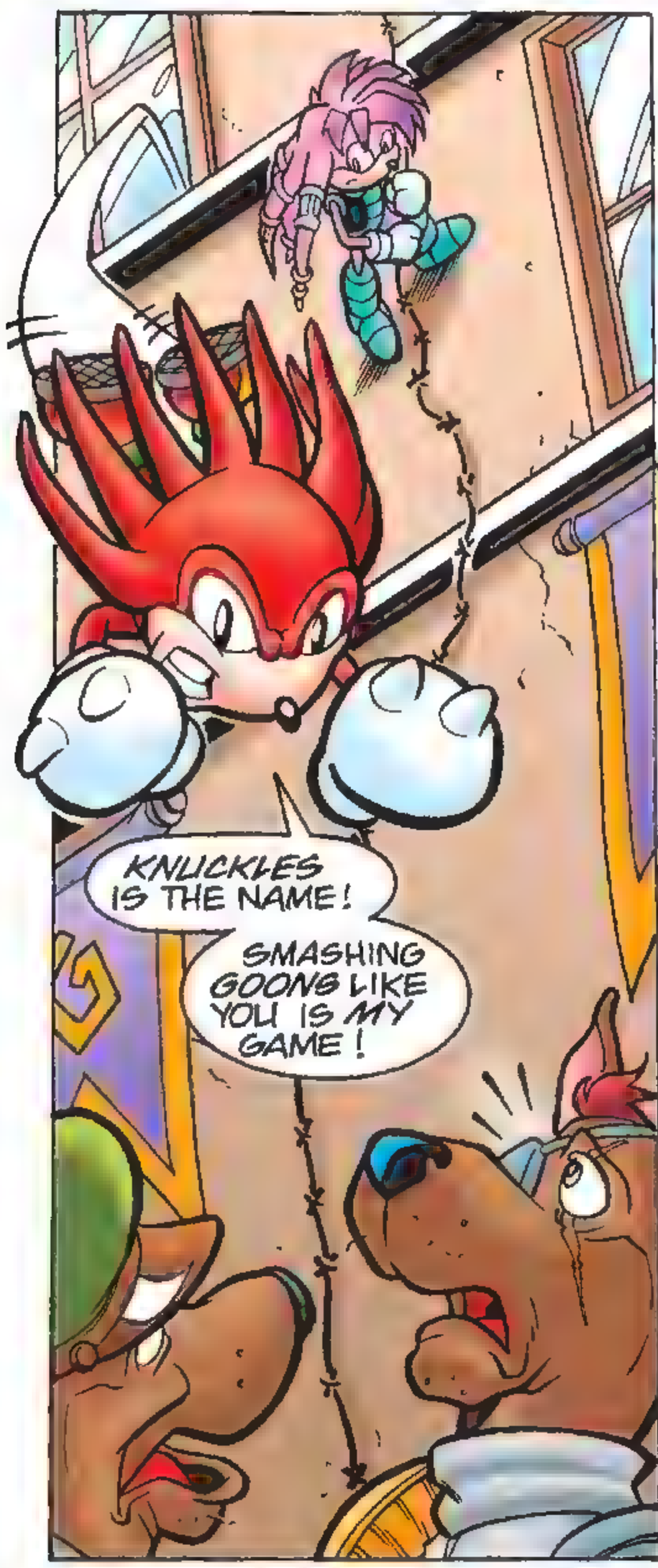

FIELD COMMANDER RAT, I BELIEVE YOU HAVE SOME GUESTS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE!
TAKE THEM TO THE SQUARE AND PUT THEM ON DISPLAY
ALIVE?

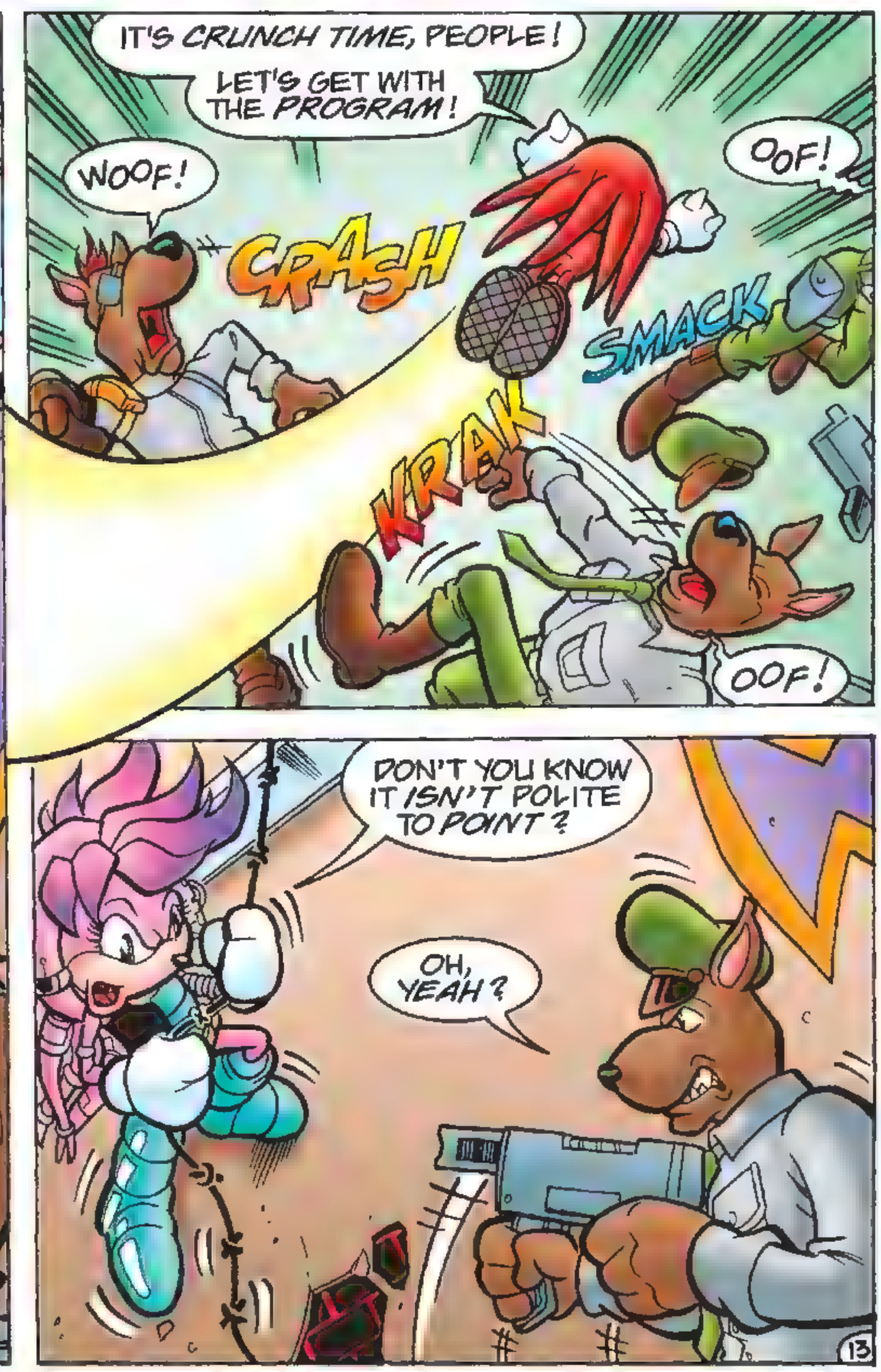
WHICHEVER YOU PREFER!
VERY WELL.
ATTENTION! LINE UP ALL THE ECHIDNAS AGAINST THE WALL!

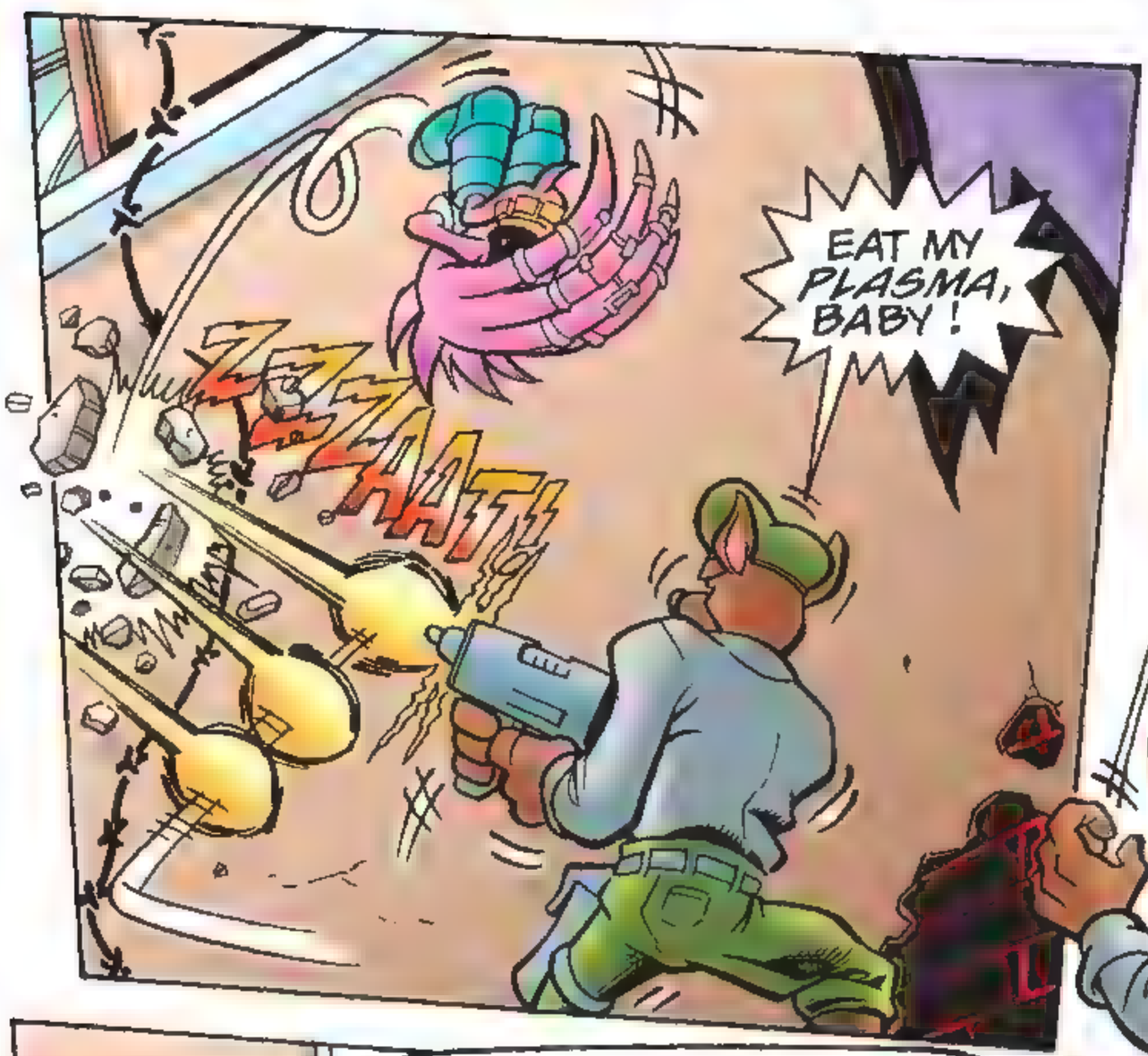
WE'D SOONER GIVE OUR LIVES THAN SUBMIT TO A BEAST LIKE YOURSELF!
AS YOU WISH! READY--AIM--FIRE!

HAHAHAHA
KLIK!
THE JOKE'S ON YOU!
WE'RE PLAYING MY FAVORITE GAME— AND YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHEN IT GETS REAL!
KLIK!
KLIK!

GUESS WHAT, DINGBAT? WE'RE ABOUT TO PLAY MY FAVORITE GAME INSTEAD!
WHAT?!! WHO DARES?!!

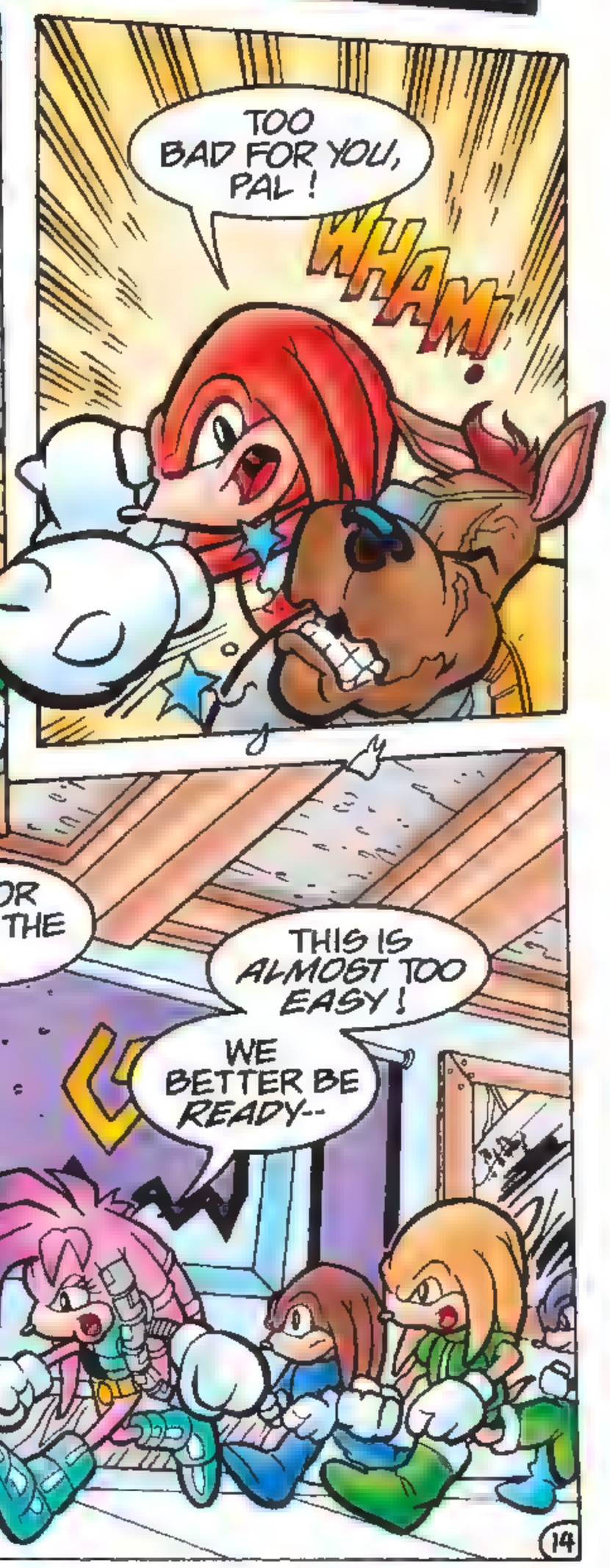

KNUCKLES IS THE NAME!
SMASHING GOONS LIKE YOU IS MY GAME!

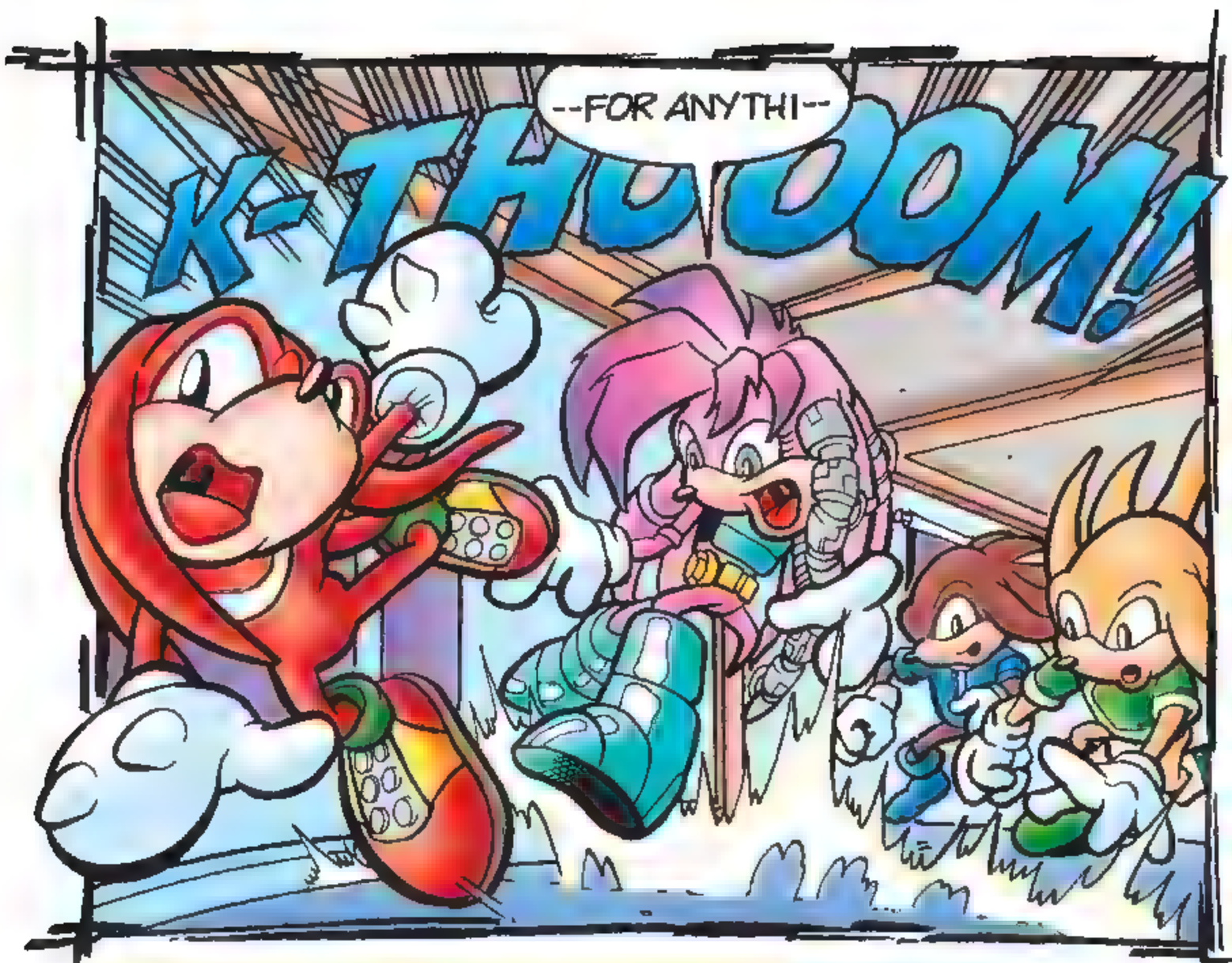

IT'S CRUNCH TIME, PEOPLE!
LET'S GET WITH THE PROGRAM!
WOOF!
CRASH
OOF!
SMACK
KRAK
OOF!
DON'T YOU KNOW IT ISN'T POLITE TO POINT?
OH, YEAH?


EAT MY PLASMA, BABY!
ZZZHAT!

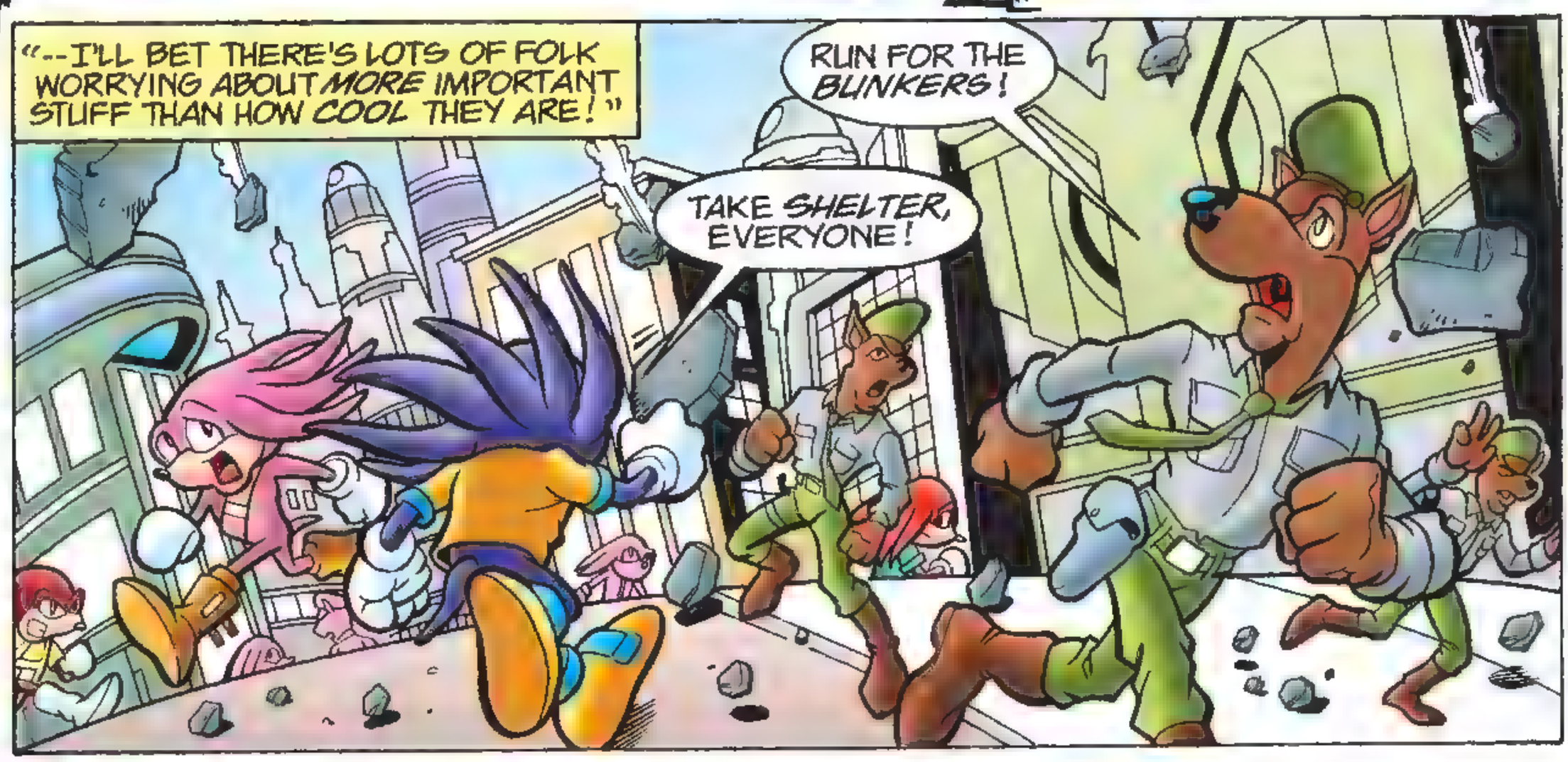
SORRY! WRONG FLAVOR!
AT LEAST YOU'RE USEFUL FOR SOMETHING!
WHUMP!

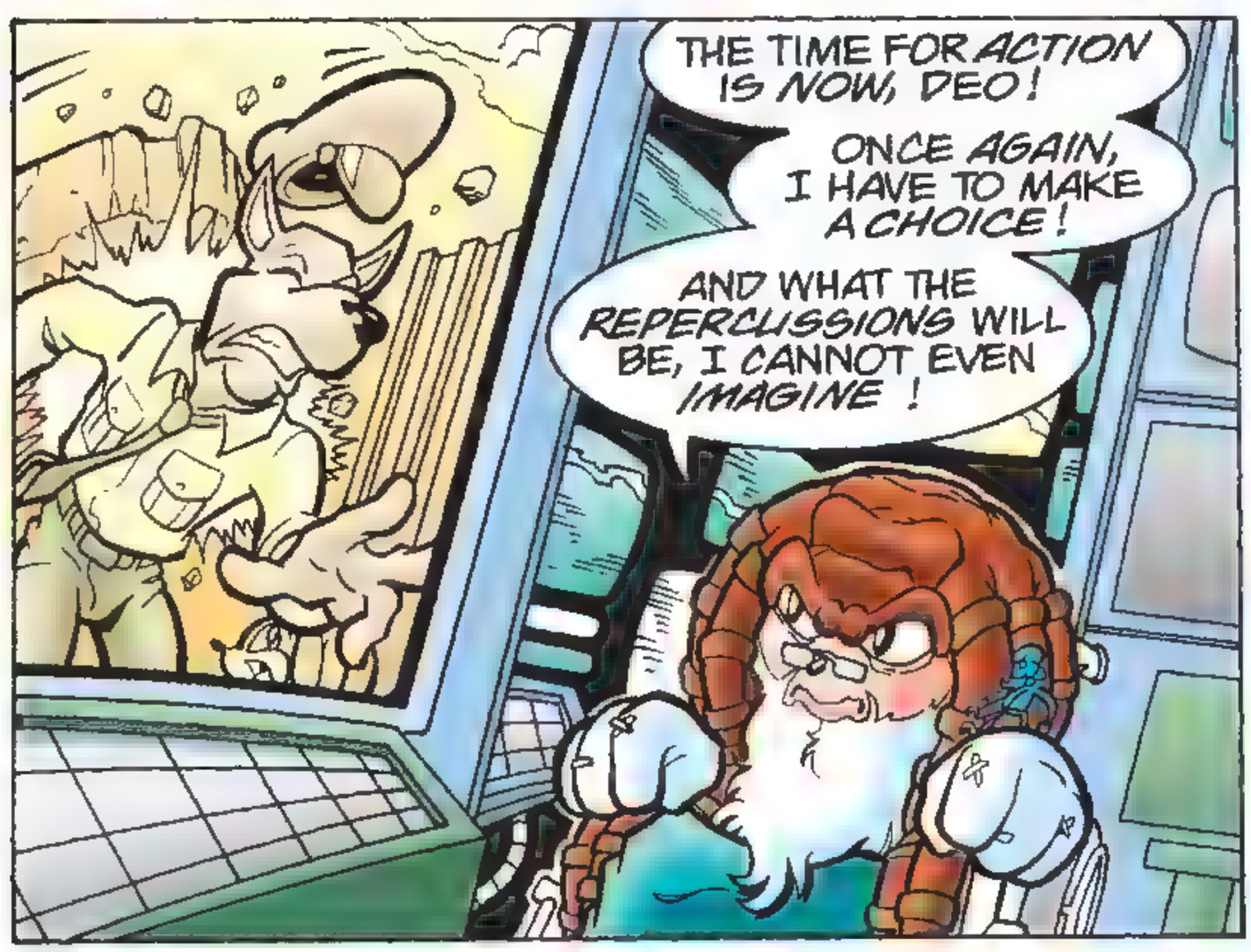
LISTEN, GRUESOME, I NEED TO RAP WITH YOUR MASTER! WHERE IS HE?
WHY SHOULD I TELL ECHIDNA GARBAGE LIKE YOU?
WE CAN SHOW YOU WHERE, MY FRIEND! WE SAW HIM NOT LONG AGO!
DOWN THIS CORRIDOR AND TAKE A LEFT TO THE ELEVATOR!
YOU HEARD THE WORD! LET'S MOVE IT!


TOO BAD FOR YOU, PAL!
WHAM!
THIS IS ALMOST TOO EASY!
WE BETTER BE READY--


--FOR ANYTHI--
K-THUOOM!

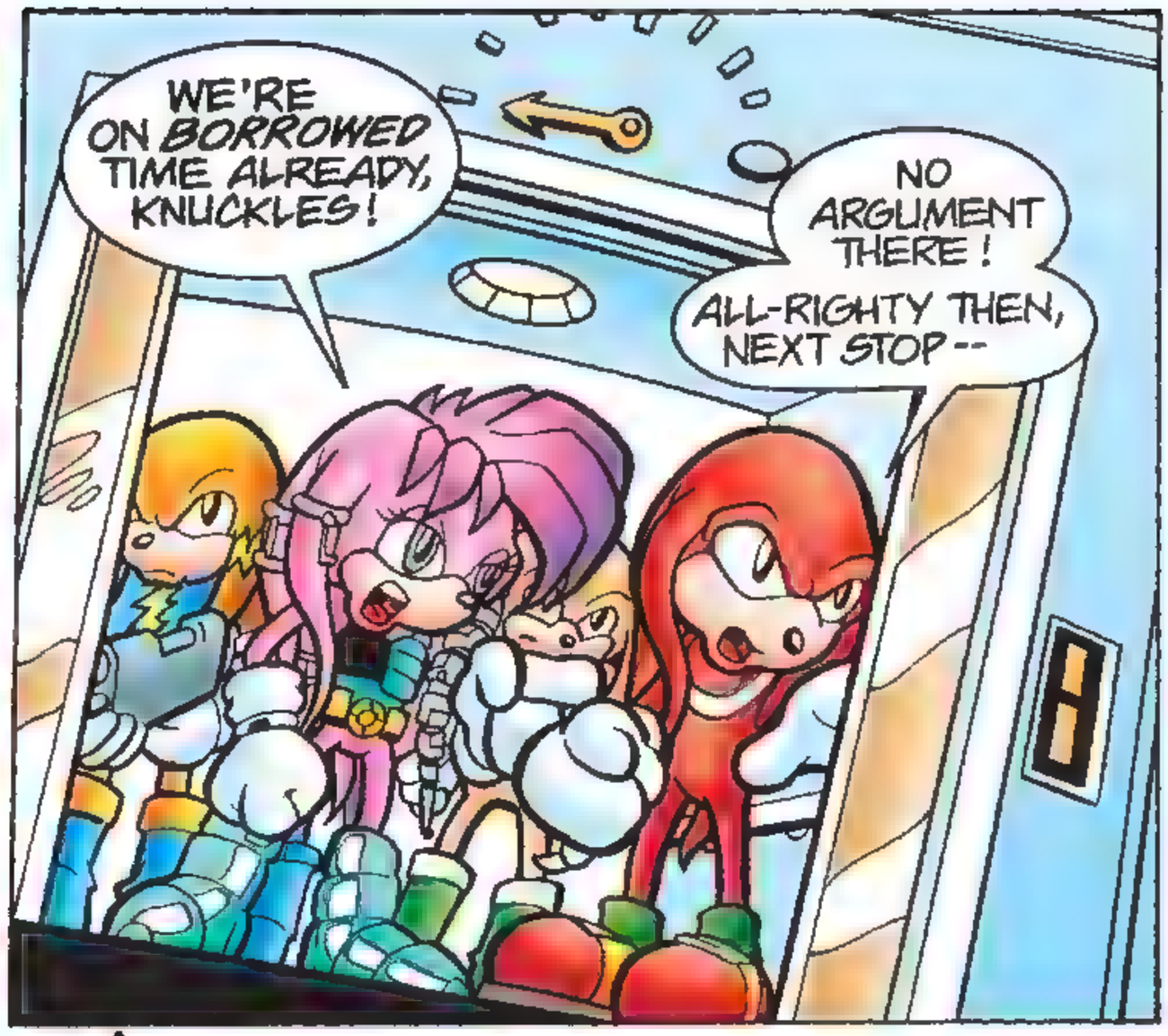
HERE! LET ME HELP YOU UP
SAVE IT FOR SOME OTHER WEAK SISTER!
RIGHT ABOUT NOW--

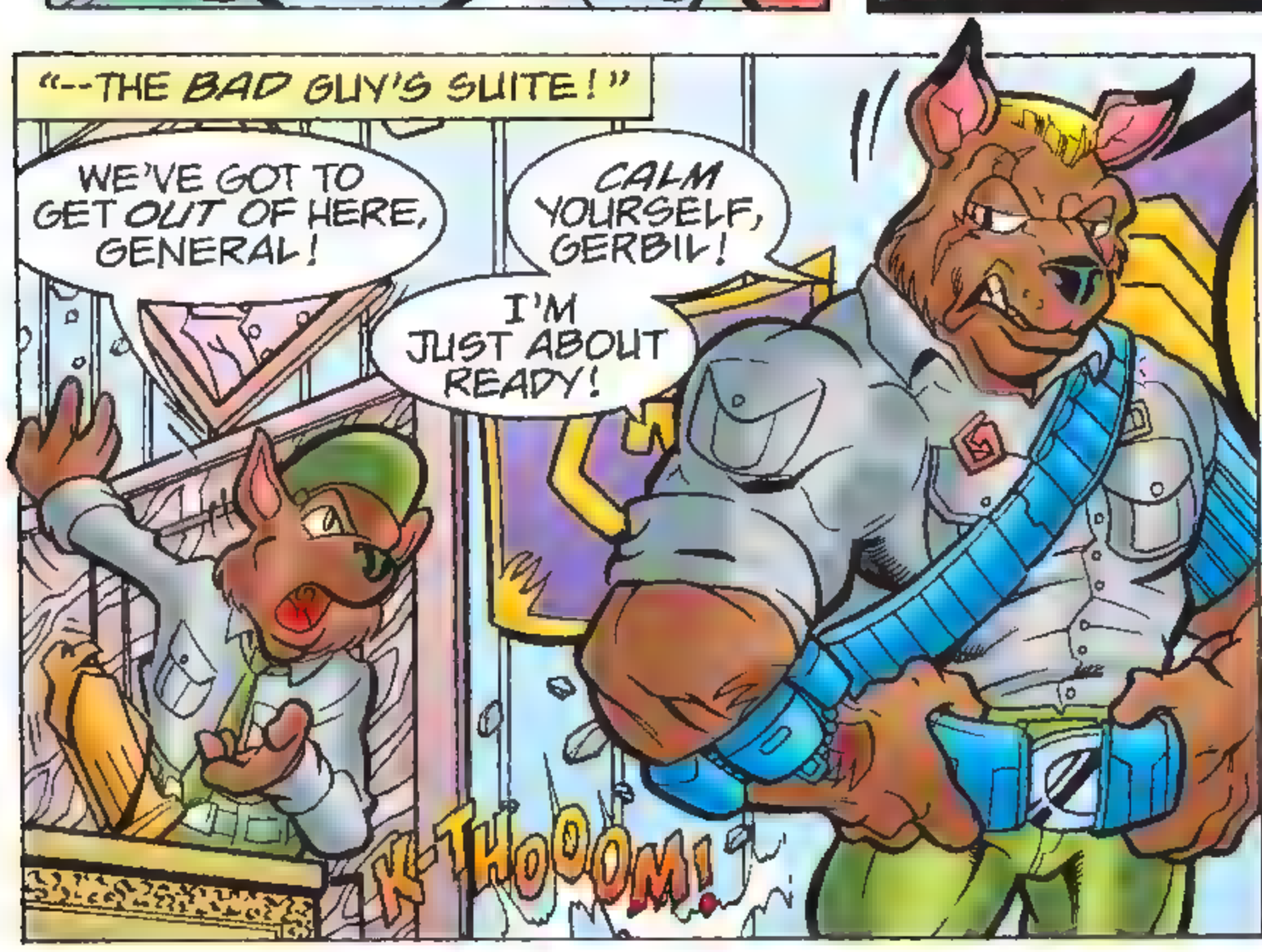

"--I'LL BET THERE'S LOTS OF FOLK WORRYING ABOUT MORE IMPORTANT STUFF THAN HOW COOL THEY ARE!"
RUN FOR THE BUNKERS!
TAKE SHELTER, EVERYONE!


THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW, DEO!
ONCE AGAIN, I HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE!
AND WHAT THE REPERCUSSIONS WILL BE, I CANNOT EVEN IMAGINE!

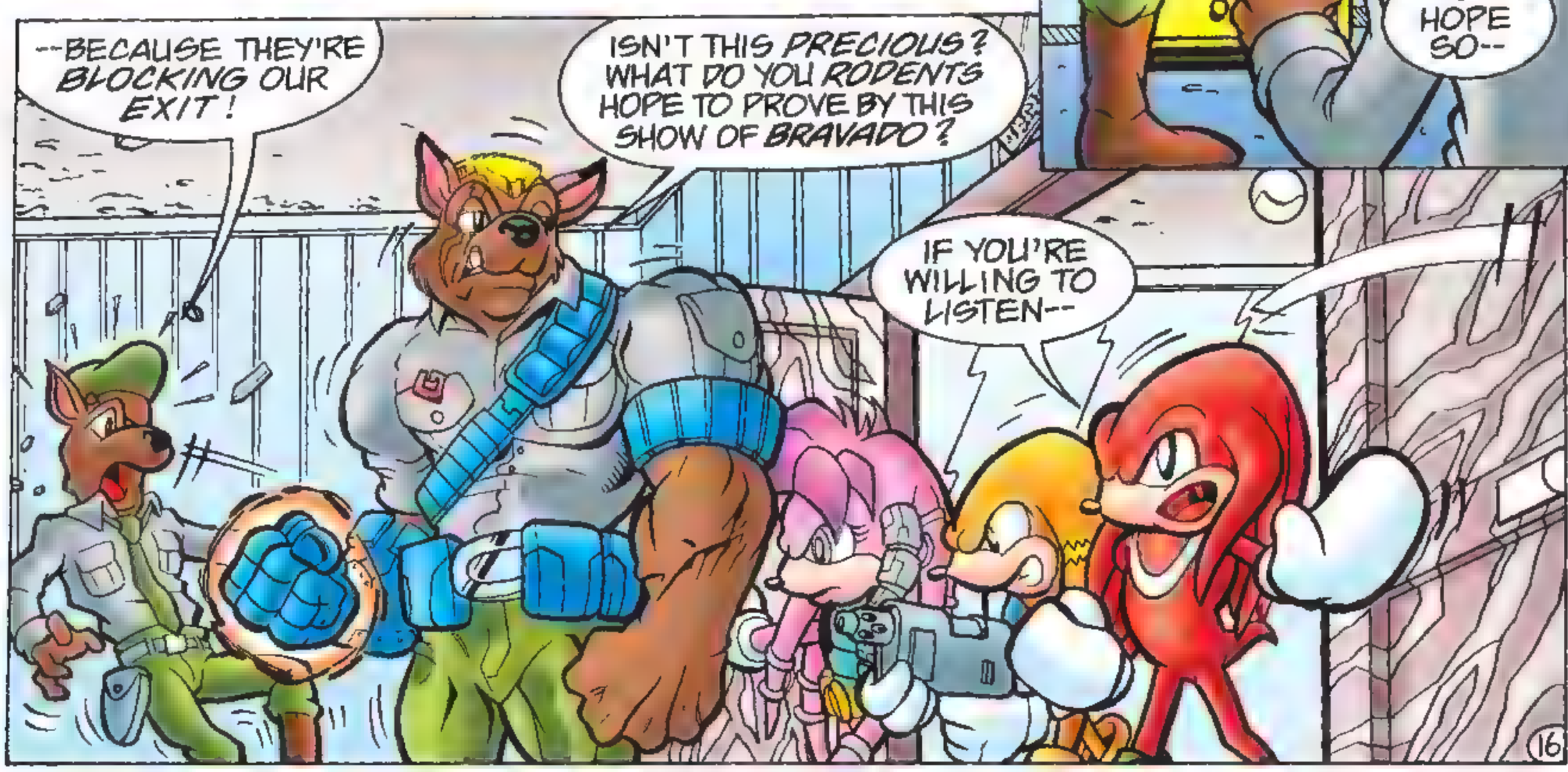
SIGNAL ARCHIMEDES-- AND TELL HIM--
TO GET EVERYONE TO SAFETY!

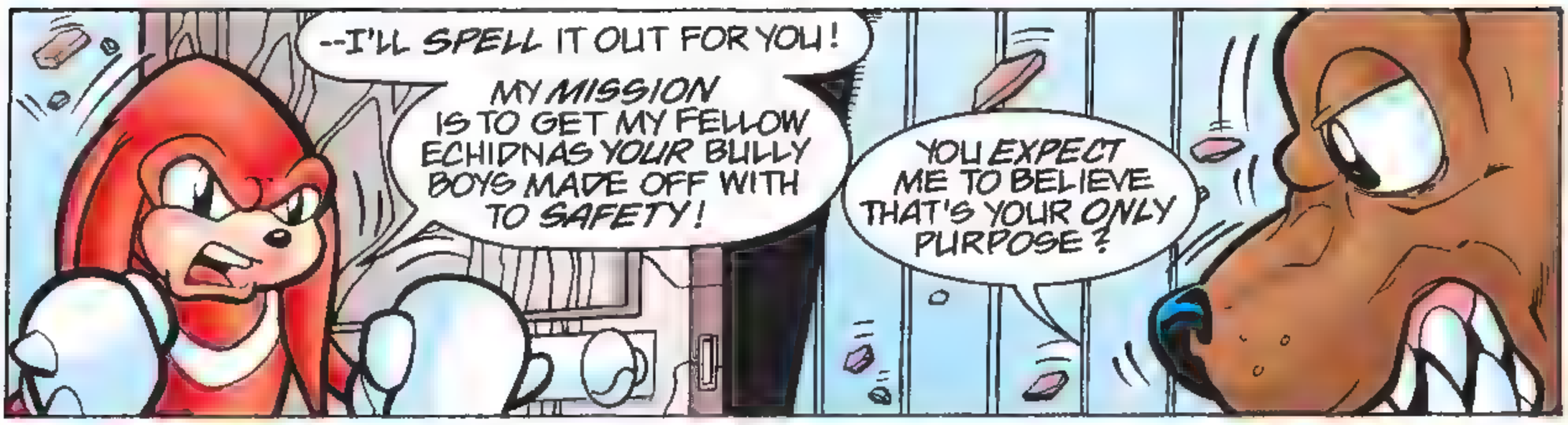
BAMF!
RED ALERT, KNUCKLES!
HAWKING SAYS TO GET EVERYONE UNDERGROUND!
HOW LONG DO WE HAVE ?

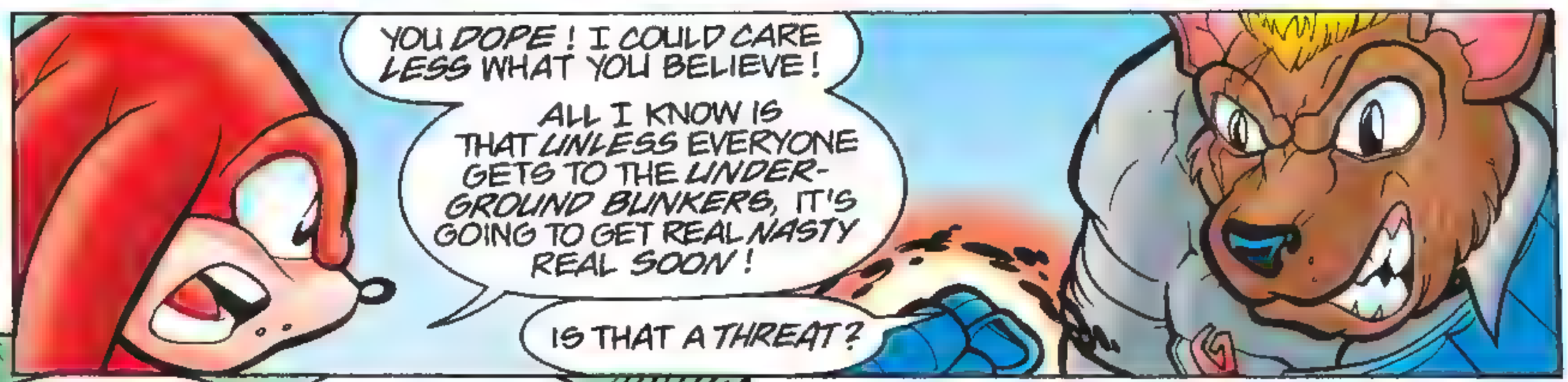

WE'RE ON BORROWED TIME ALREADY, KNUCKLES!
NO ARGUMENT THERE !
ALL-RIGHTY THEN, NEXT STOP --


"--THE BAD GUY'S SUITE!"
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, GENERAL!
CALM YOURSELF, GERBIL!
I'M JUST ABOUT READY!
K-THOOOM!

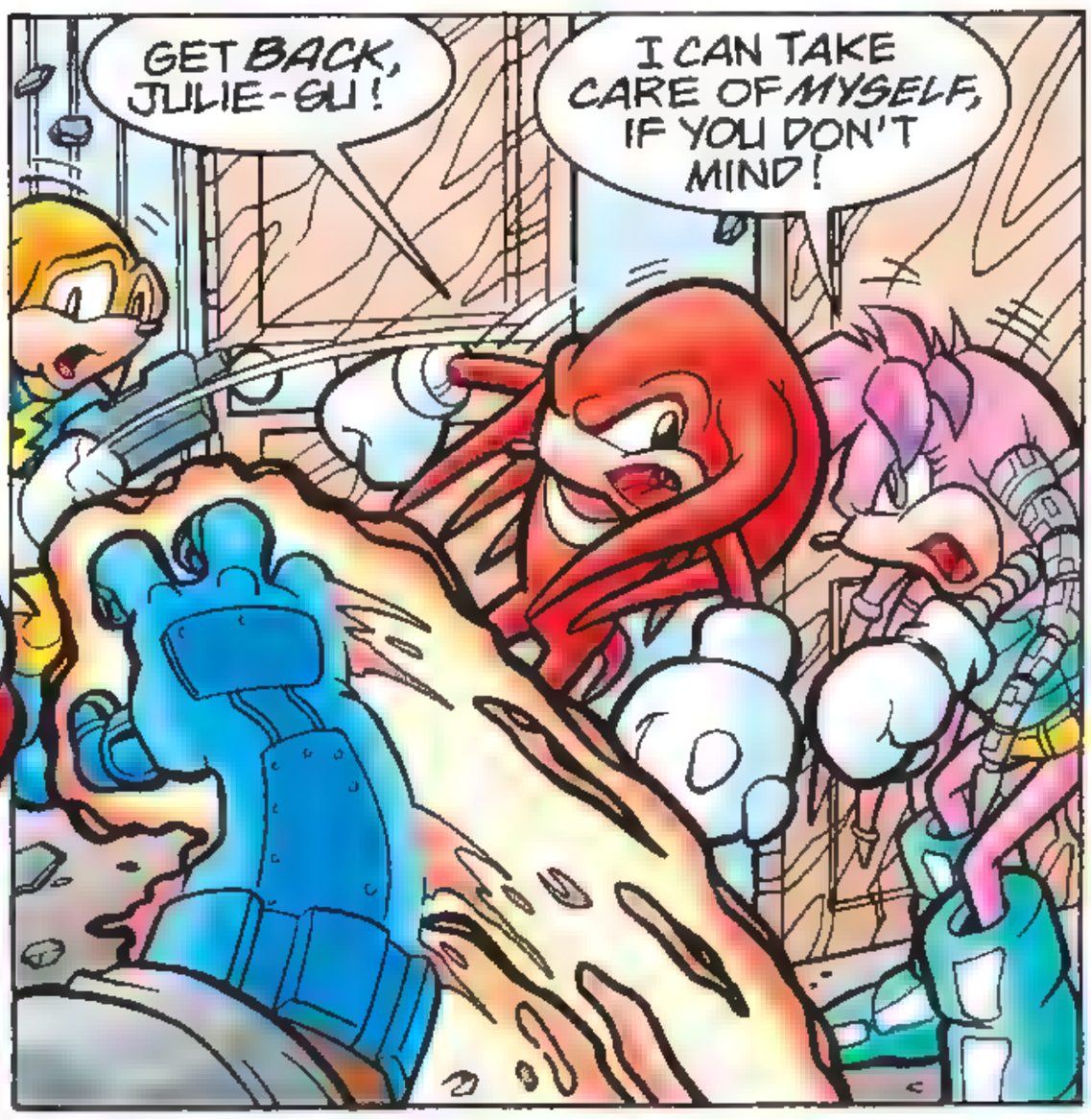
ONCE I DON MY POWER GLOVE--
--I'LL GIVE THE ACCURSED ECHIDNAS SOMETHING TO REALLY FEAR!
I HOPE SO--

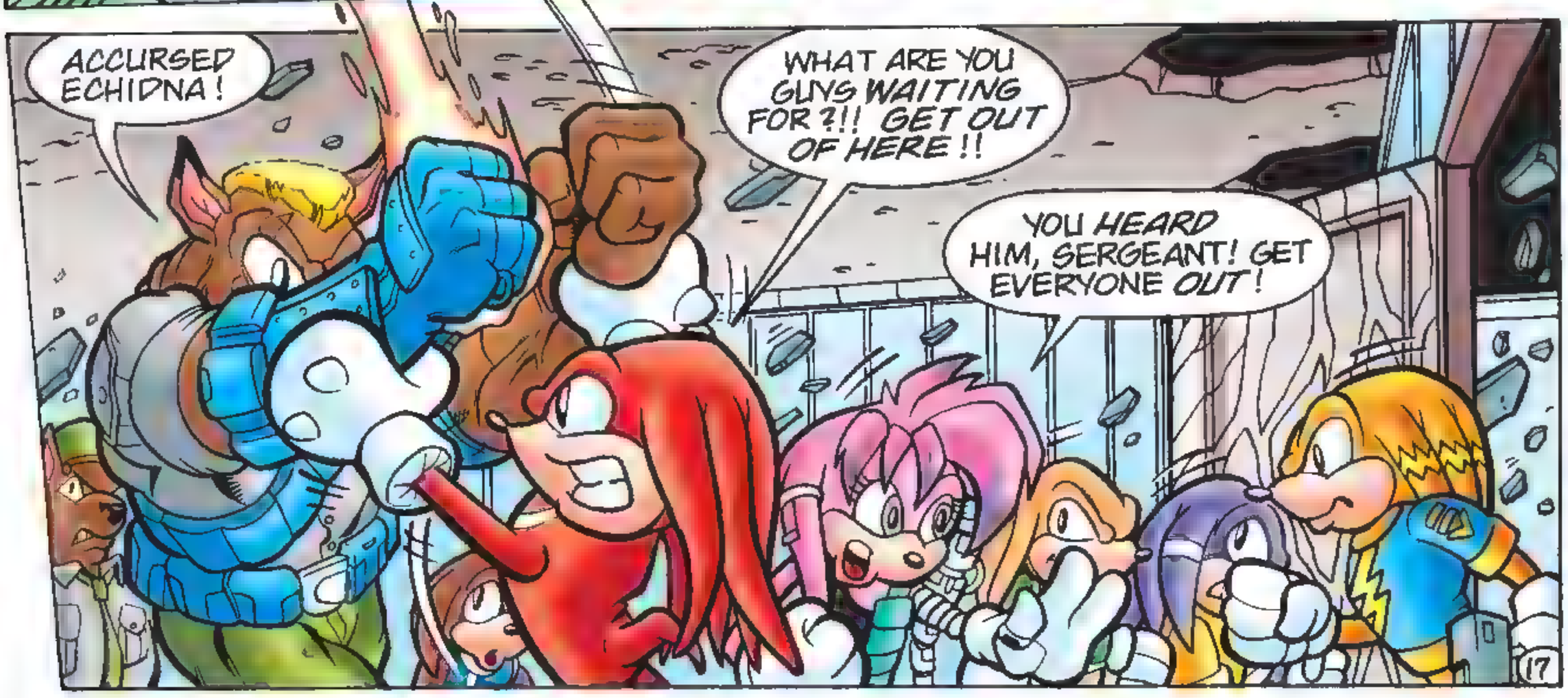

--BECAUSE THEY'RE BLOCKING OUR EXIT!
ISN'T THIS PRECIOUS? WHAT DO YOU RODENTS HOPE TO PROVE BY THIS SHOW OF BRAVADO?
IF YOU'RE WILLING TO LISTEN--

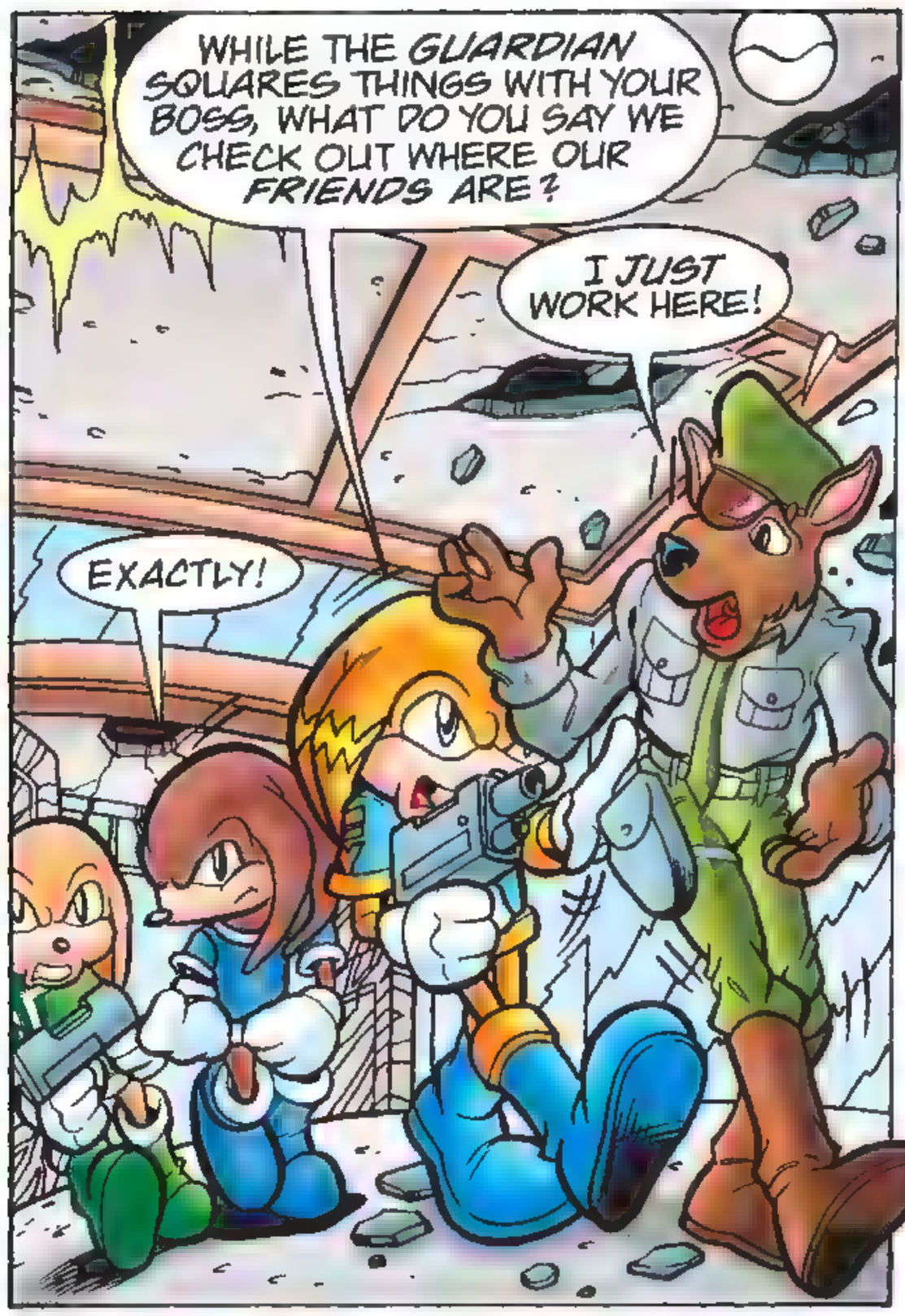

--I'LL SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU!
MY MISSION IS TO GET MY FELLOW ECHIDNAS YOUR BULLY BOYS MADE OFF WITH TO SAFETY!
YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT'S YOUR ONLY PURPOSE?

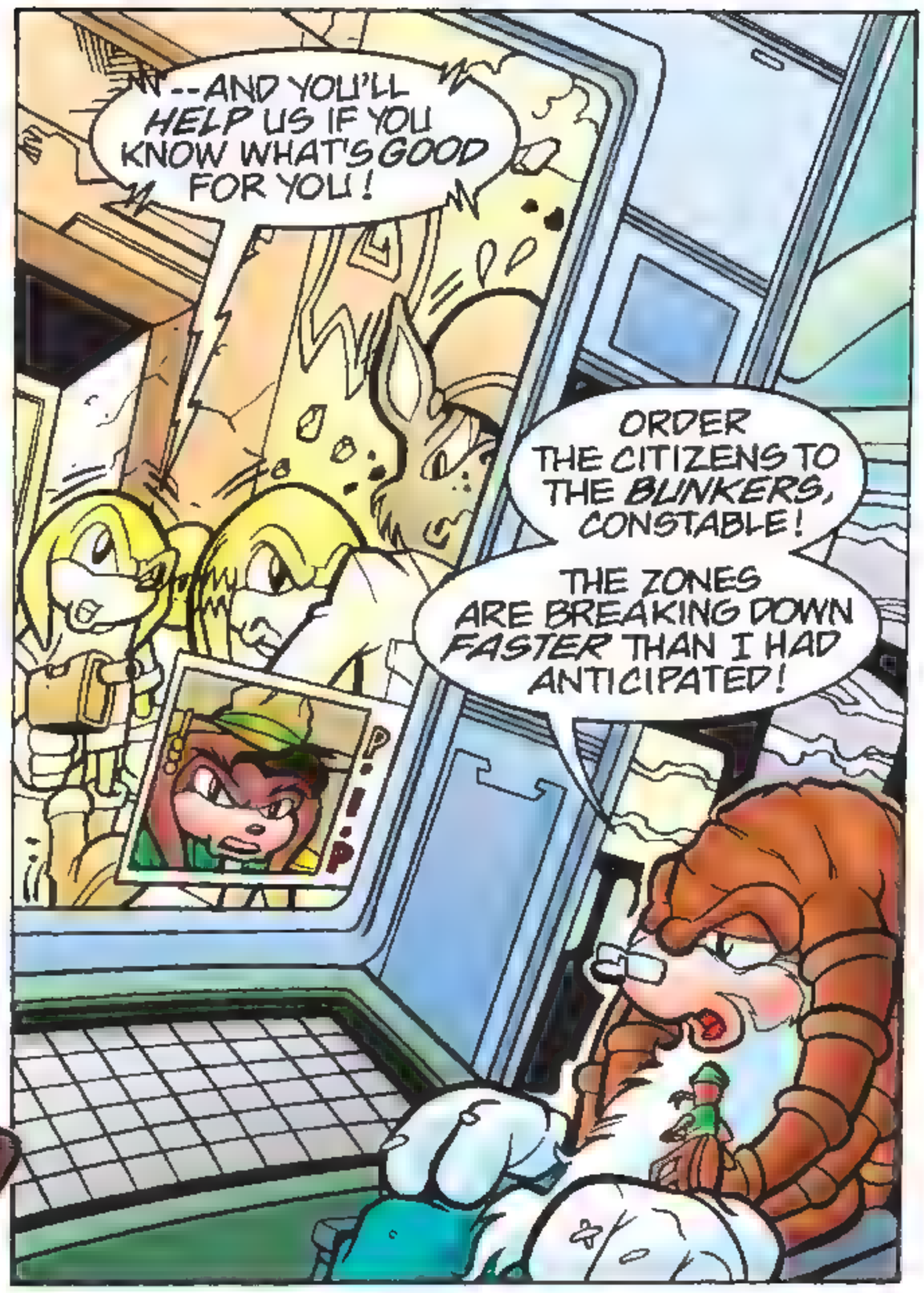

YOU DOPE! I COULD CARE LESS WHAT YOU BELIEVE!
ALL I KNOW IS THAT UNLESS EVERYONE GETS TO THE UNDER-GROUND BUNKERS, IT'S GOING TO GET REAL NASTY REAL SOON!
IS THAT A THREAT?

I'LL DO MORE THAN JUST THREATEN!
I'LL SHOW YOU POWER!
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU ECHIDNA'S WERE TAKEN DOWN A PEG OR TWO!
GERRAAKSHH!!!

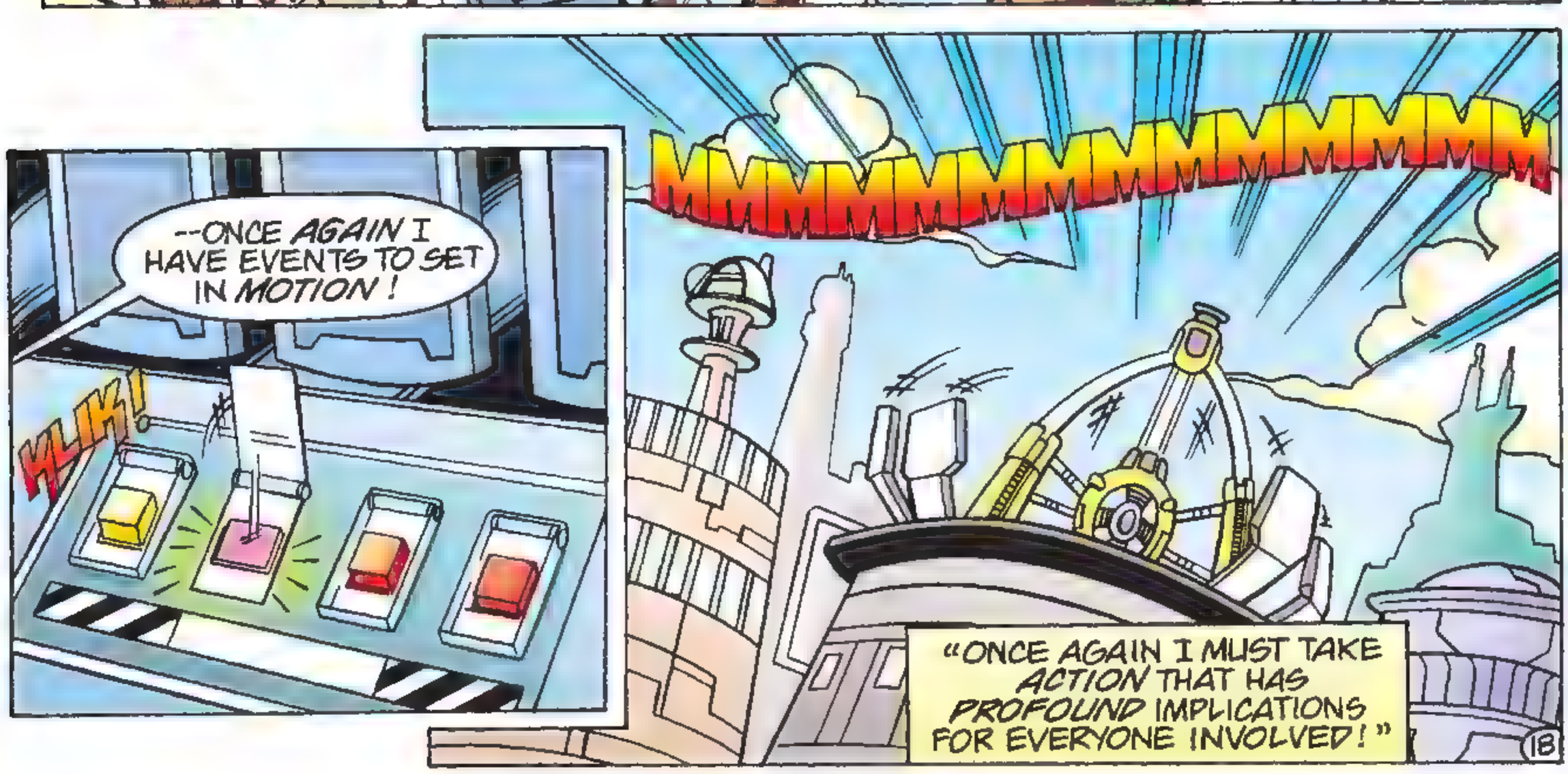

GET BACK, JULIE-SU!
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, IF YOU DON'T MIND!


ACCURSED ECHIDNA!
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS WAITING FOR?!! GET OUT OF HERE!!
YOU HEARD HIM, SERGEANT! GET EVERYONE OUT!


WHILE THE GUARDIAN SQUARES THINGS WITH YOUR BOSS, WHAT DO YOU SAY WE CHECK OUT WHERE OUR FRIENDS ARE?
I JUST WORK HERE!
EXACTLY!


--AND YOU'LL HELP US IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU!
ORDER THE CITIZENS TO THE BUNKERS, CONSTABLE!
THE ZONES ARE BREAKING DOWN FASTER THAN I HAD ANTICIPATED!

WILL THAT BE ALL, GUARDIAN?
THAT WILL BE ALL FOR NOW, CONSTABLE! OUT!
AS FOR ME--


--ONCE AGAIN I HAVE EVENTS TO SET IN MOTION!
KLIK!
MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM
"ONCE AGAIN I MUST TAKE ACTION THAT HAS PROFOUND IMPLICATIONS FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED!"

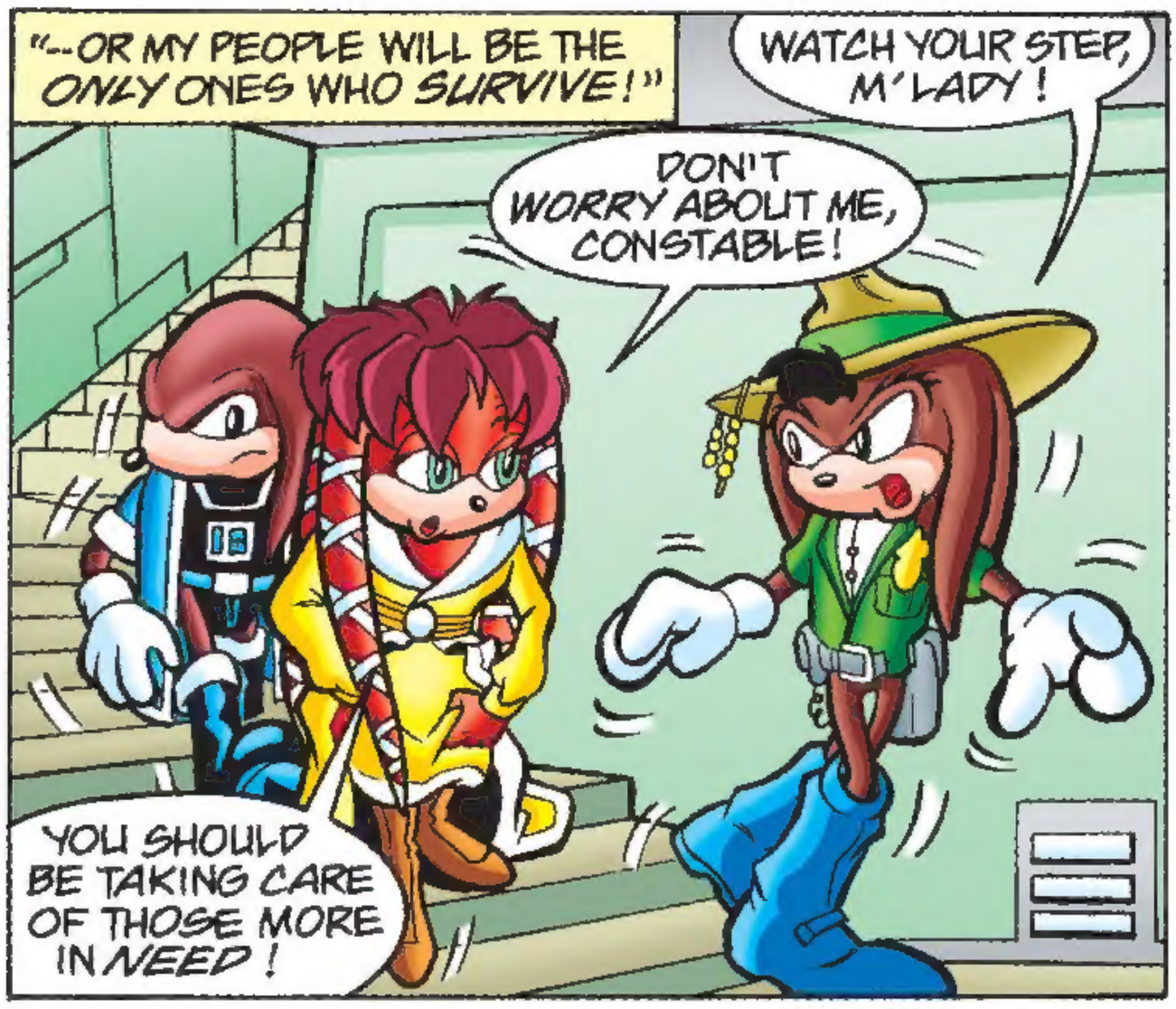
"SUCH IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A GUARDIAN!"
NO LONGER WILL MY PEOPLE SUFFER AT THE HANDS OF YOUR KIND!
DO YOU HEAR ME?
KRAKSHH!!

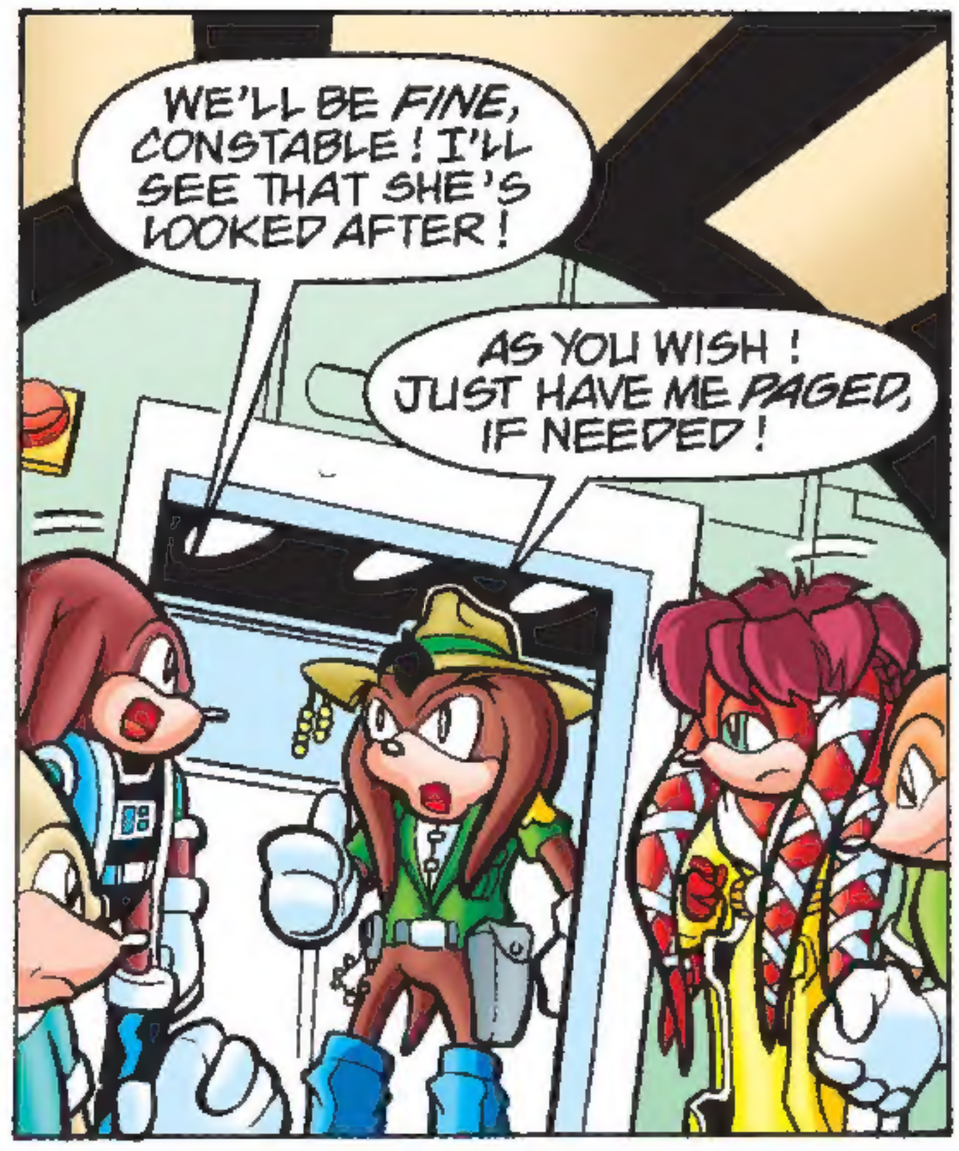
CRYSTAL, BABE!
PERSONALLY, I THINK YOU NEED OTHER OUTLETS FOR YOUR AGGRESSIVE NATURE!

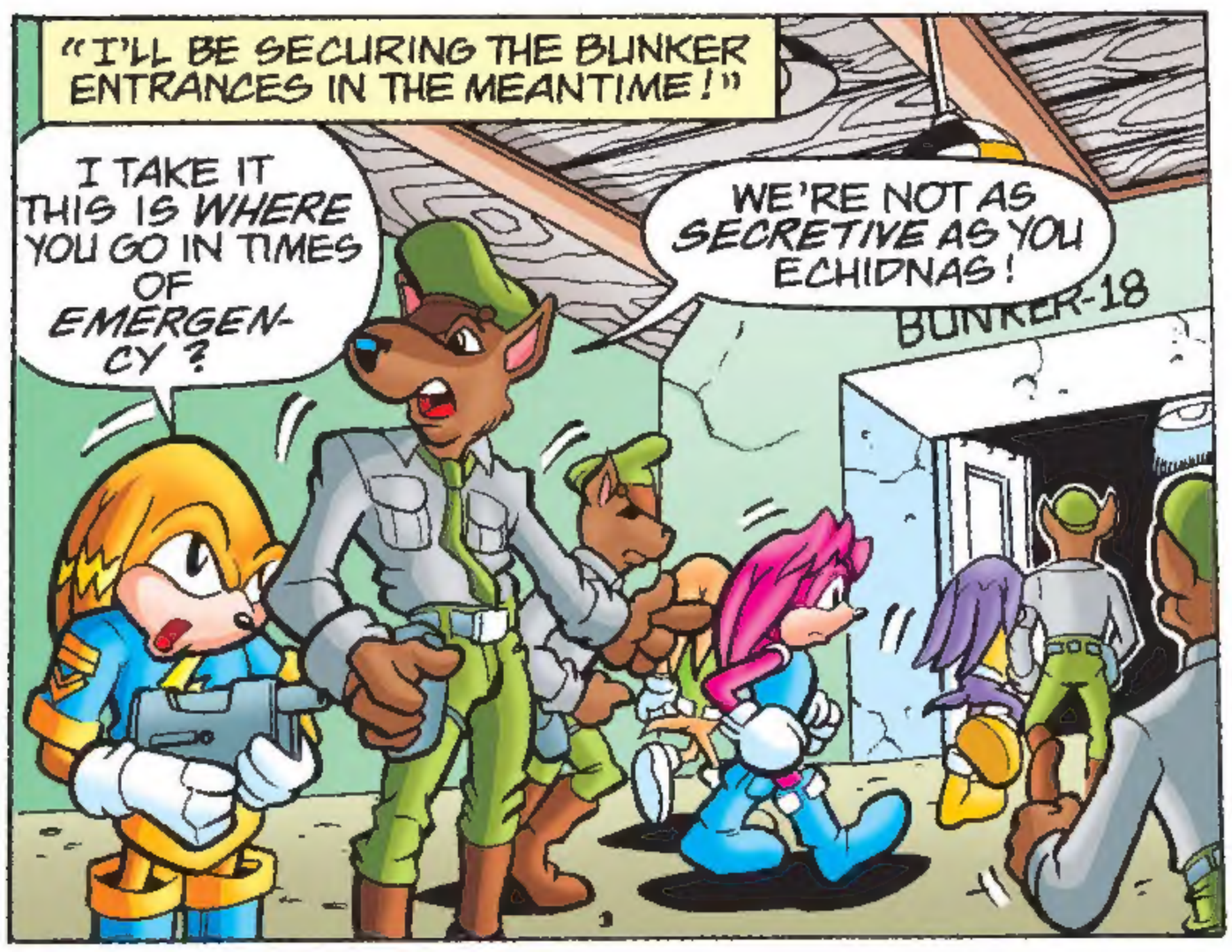
LET'S SEE HOW FUNNY YOU ARE WHEN I--
OOF!
ZZZRRIIP!
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?
JUST HOLD THAT POSE--

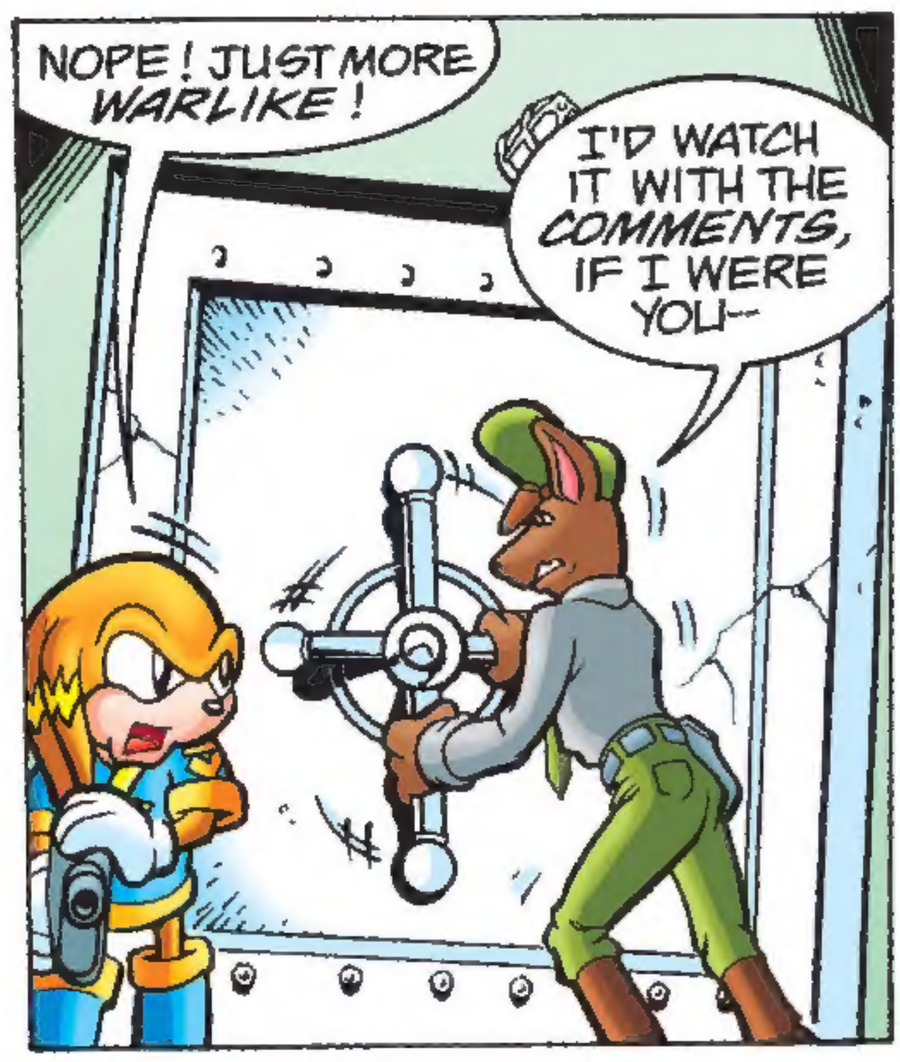
--AND I'LL TRY TO MAKE MYSELF PERFECTLY CLEAR!
WHAM!
I THINK HE GOT THE POINT!

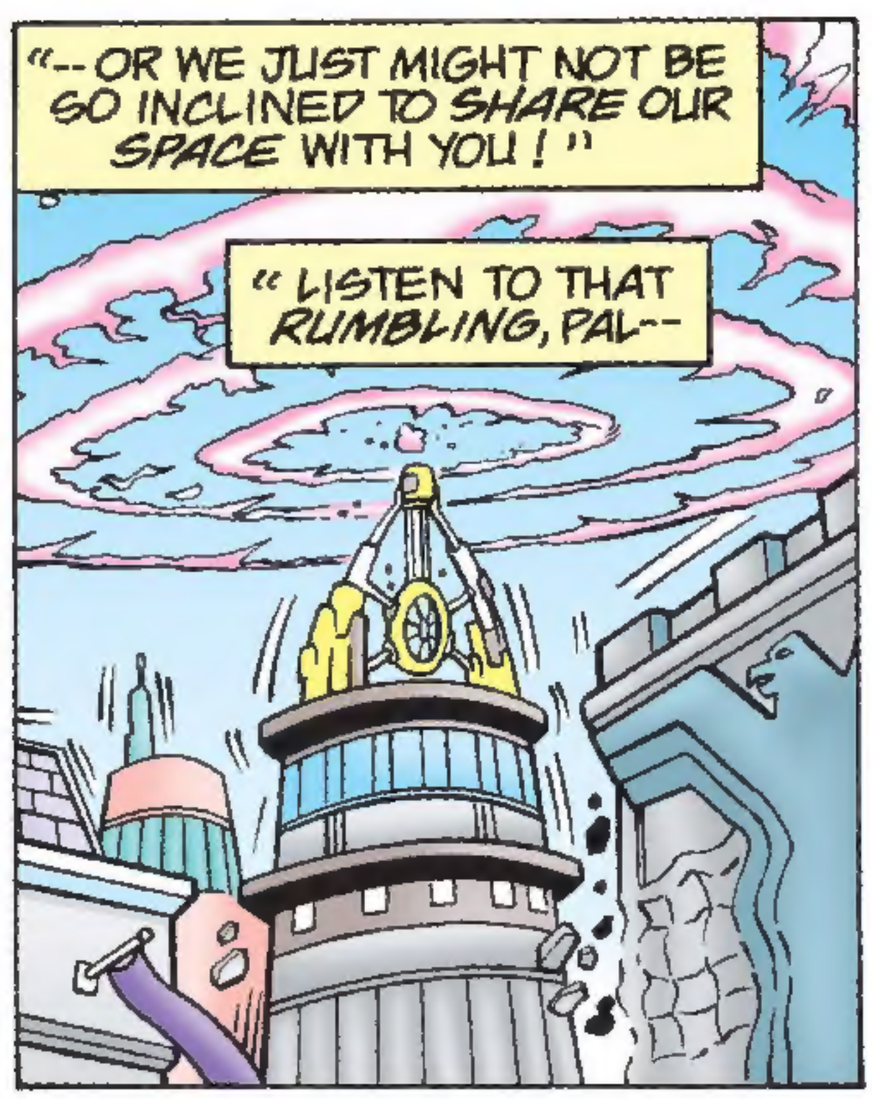
YOU AIN'T EXACTLY MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE, BUB--
--BUT I NEED YOU TO GET YOUR THUGS TO GO ALONG WITH THE PROGRAM!
SO WE EITHER CALL A TRUCE--

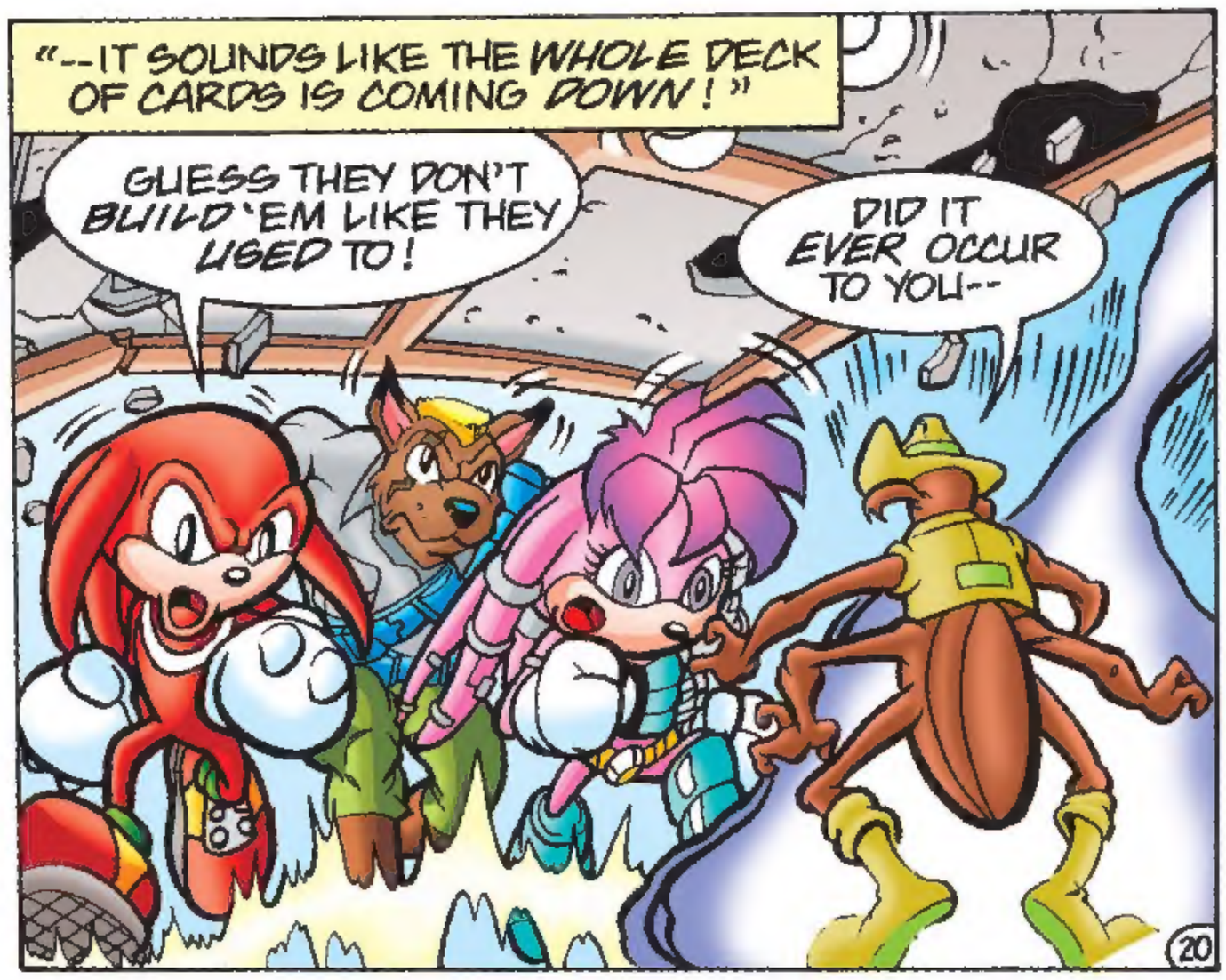

"--OR MY PEOPLE WILL BE THE ONLY ONES WHO SURVIVE!"
WATCH YOUR STEP, M'LADY!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, CONSTABLE!
YOU SHOULD BE TAKING CARE OF THOSE MORE IN NEED!

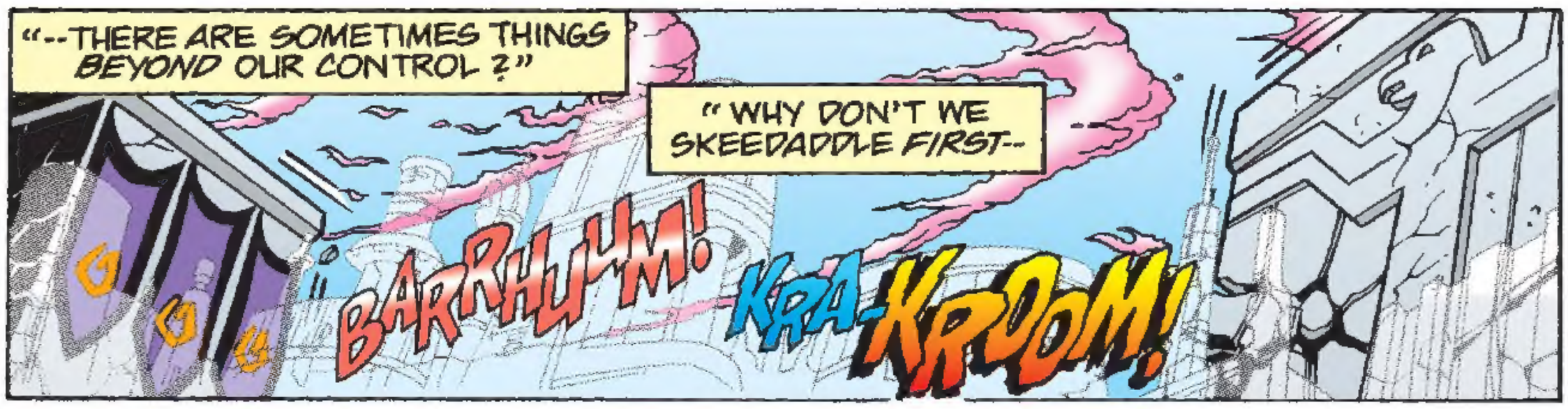

WE'LL BE FINE, CONSTABLE! I'LL SEE THAT SHE'S LOOKED AFTER!
AS YOU WISH! JUST HAVE ME PAGED, IF NEEDED!

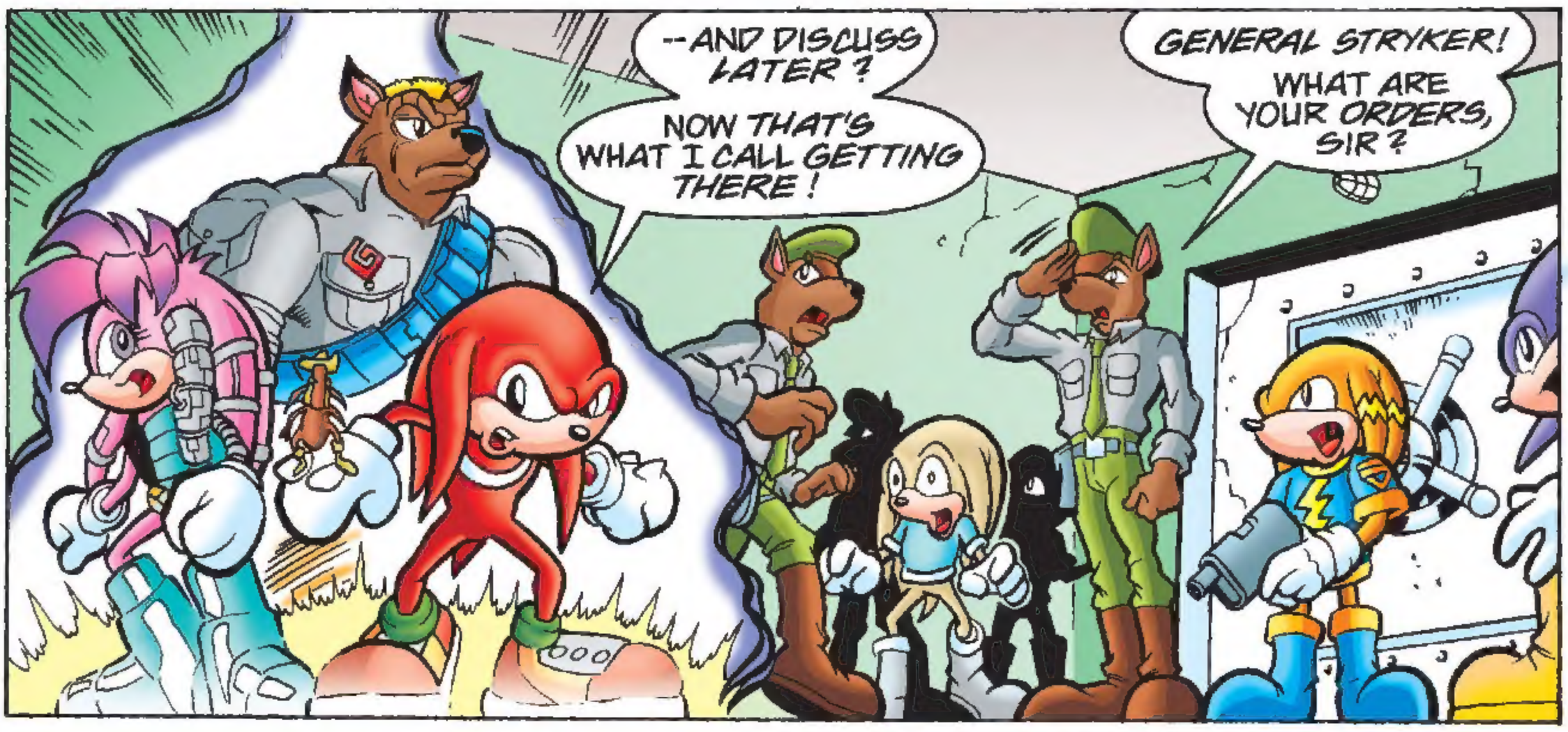

"I'LL BE SECURING THE BUNKER ENTRANCES IN THE MEANTIME!"
I TAKE IT THIS IS WHERE YOU GO IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY?
WE'RE NOT AS SECRETIVE AS YOU ECHIDNAS!
BUNKER-18

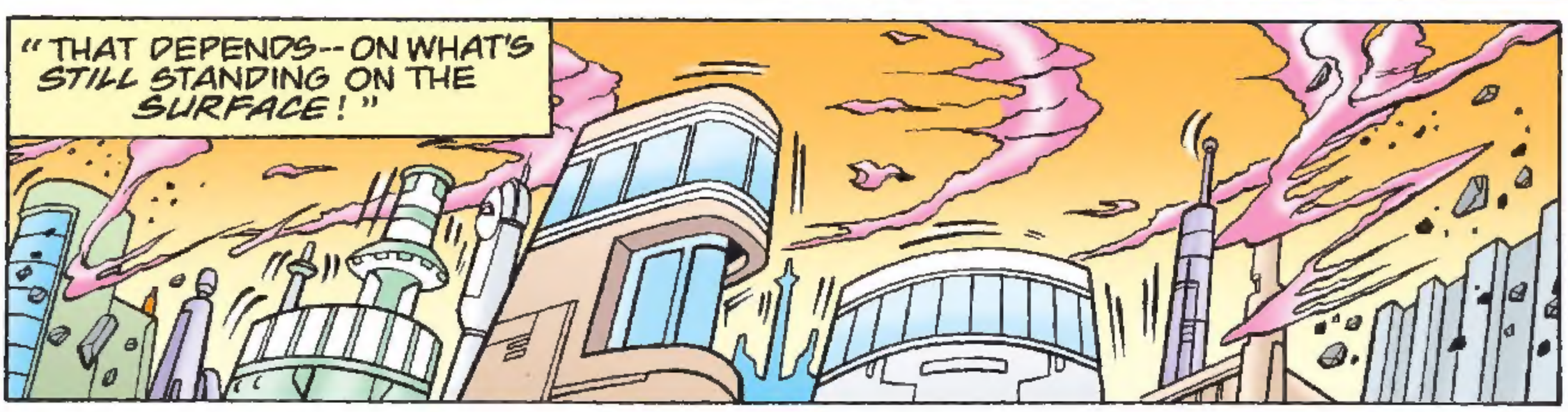

NOPE! JUST MORE WARLIKE!
I'D WATCH IT WITH THE COMMENTS, IF I WERE YOU--

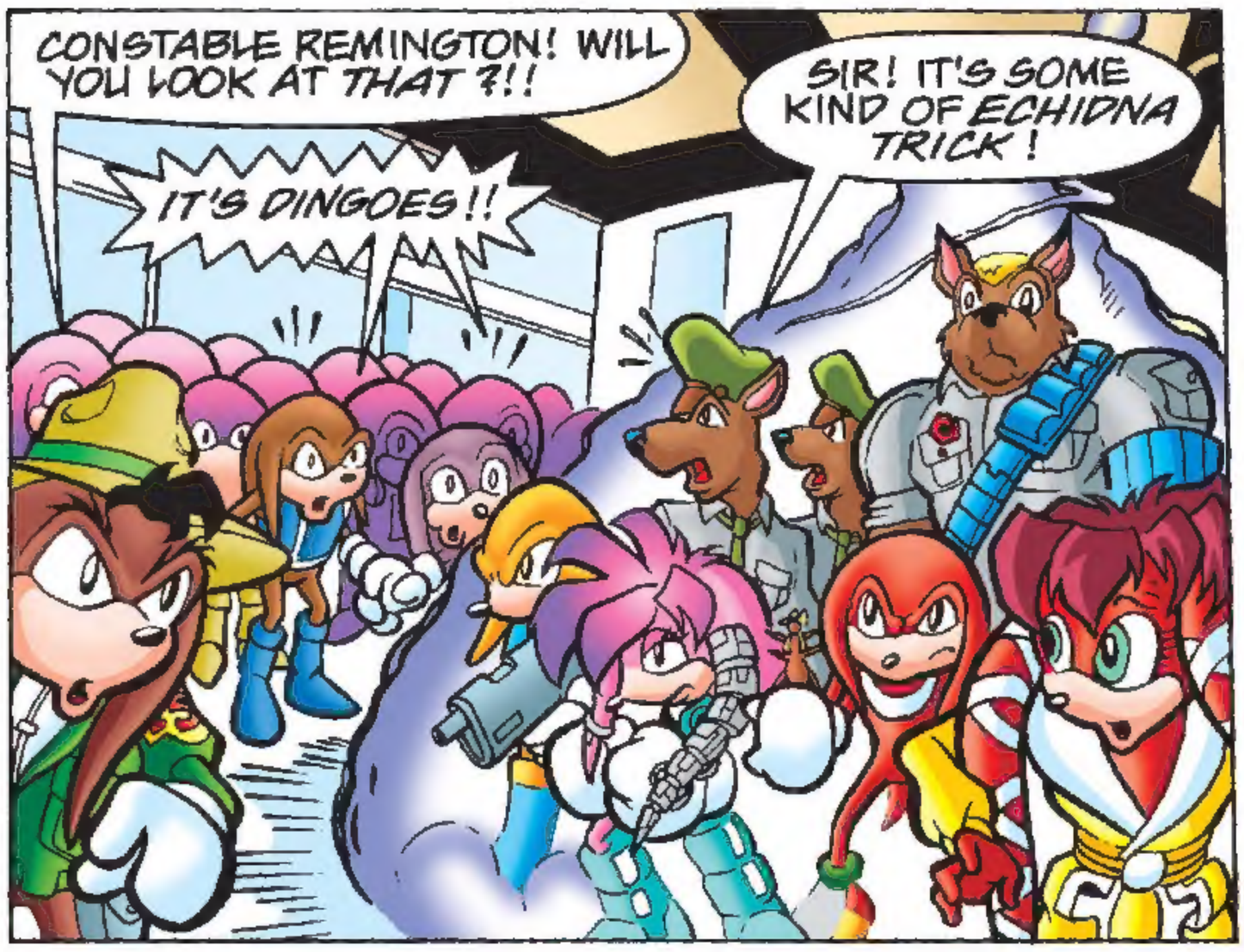

"--OR WE JUST MIGHT NOT BE SO INCLINED TO SHARE OUR SPACE WITH YOU!"
"LISTEN TO THAT RUMBLING, PAL--

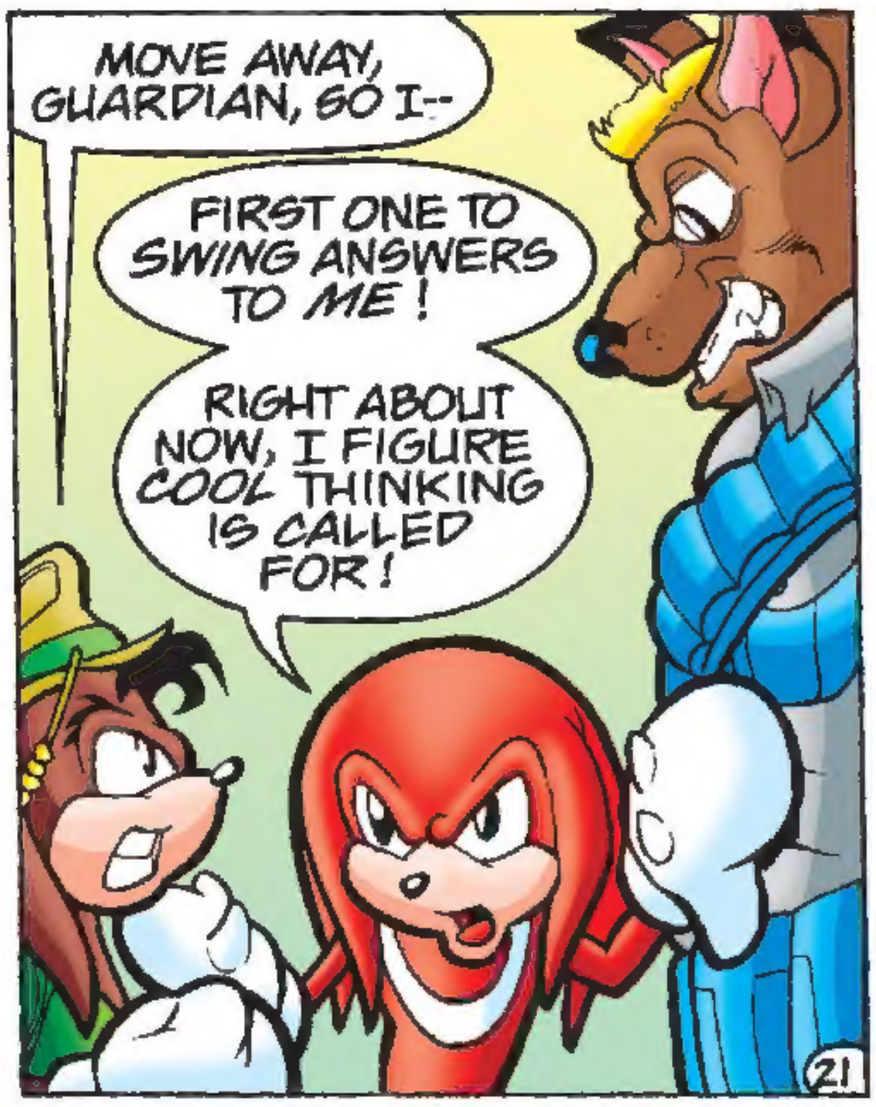

"--IT SOUNDS LIKE THE WHOLE DECK OF CARDS IS COMING DOWN!"
GUESS THEY DON'T BUILD 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO!
DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU--

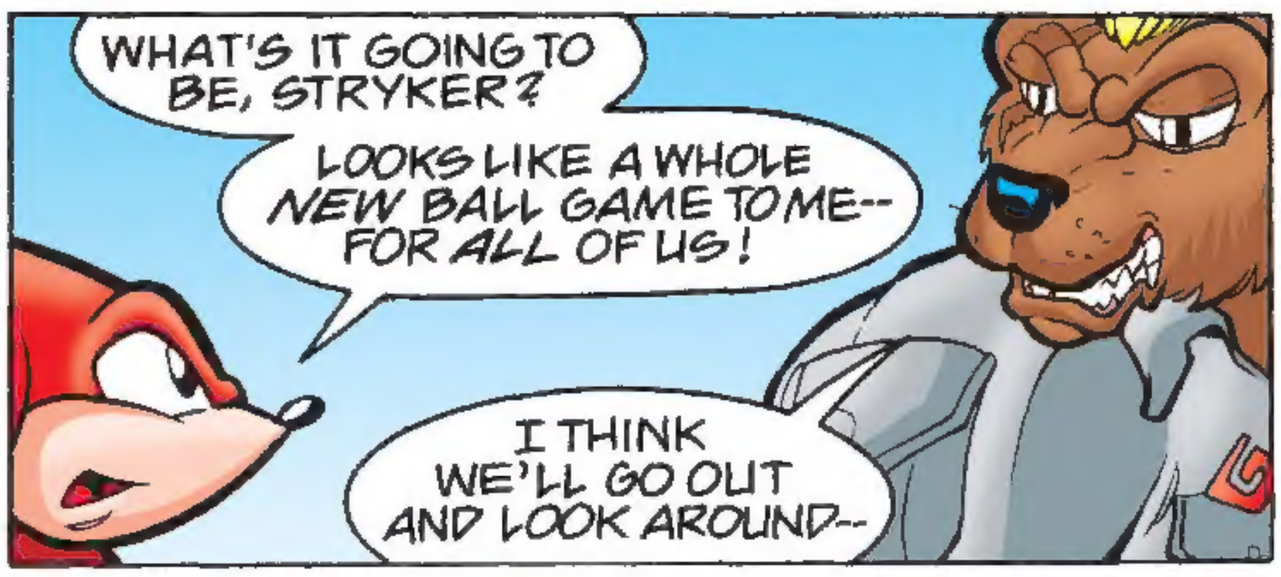

"--THERE ARE SOMETIMES THINGS BEYOND OUR CONTROL ?"
" WHY DON'T WE SKEEDADDLE FIRST--
BARRHUMM!
KRA-KROOM!


--AND DISCUSS LATER ?
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL GETTING THERE !
GENERAL STRYKER!
WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS, SIR ?

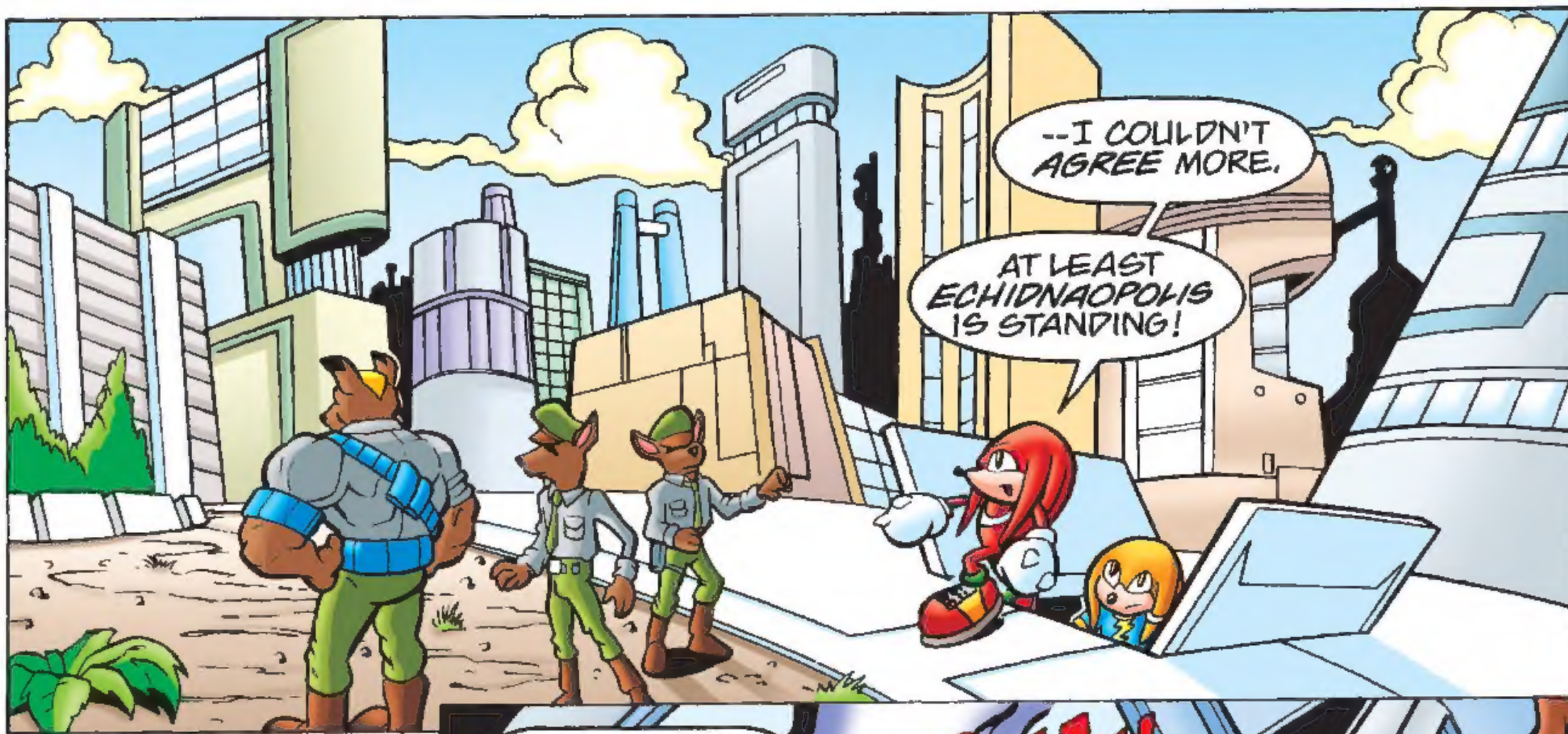

" THAT DEPENDS-- ON WHAT'S STILL STANDING ON THE SURFACE ! "

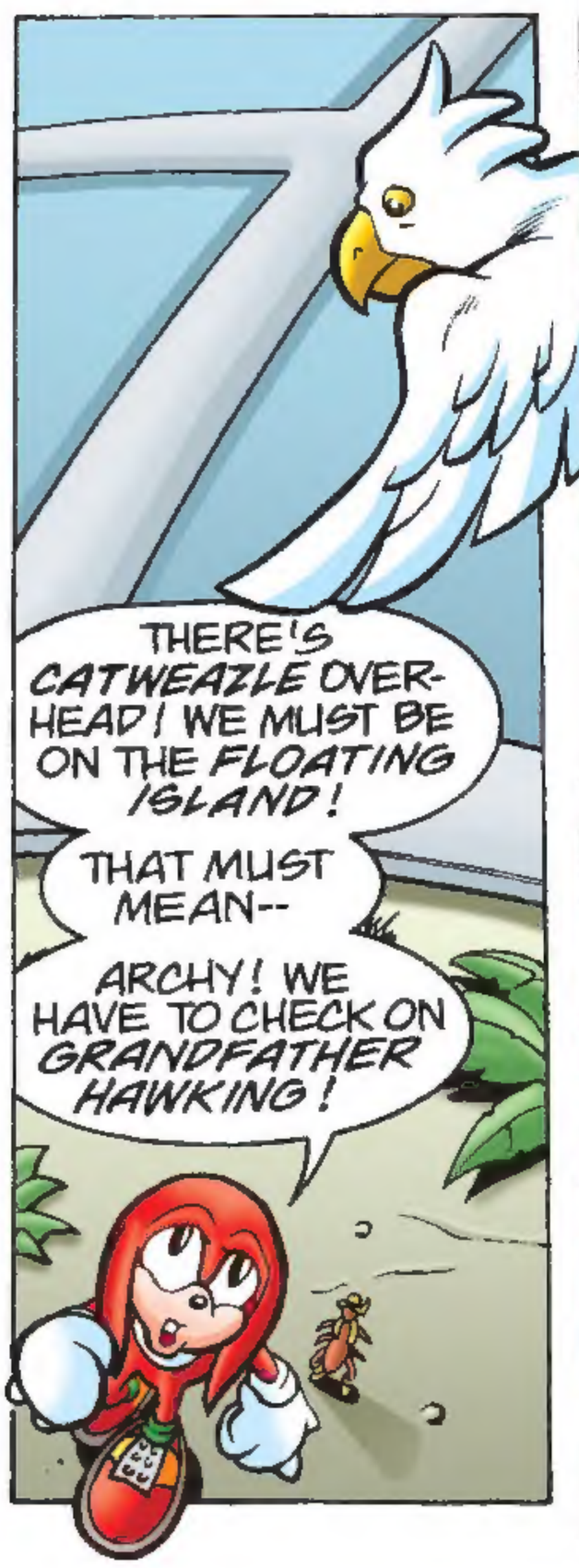

CONSTABLE REMINGTON! WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT ?!!
IT'S DINGOES !!
SIR! IT'S SOME KIND OF ECHIDNA TRICK !


MOVE AWAY, GUARDIAN, SO I--
FIRST ONE TO SWING ANSWERS TO ME !
RIGHT ABOUT NOW, I FIGURE COOL THINKING IS CALLED FOR !

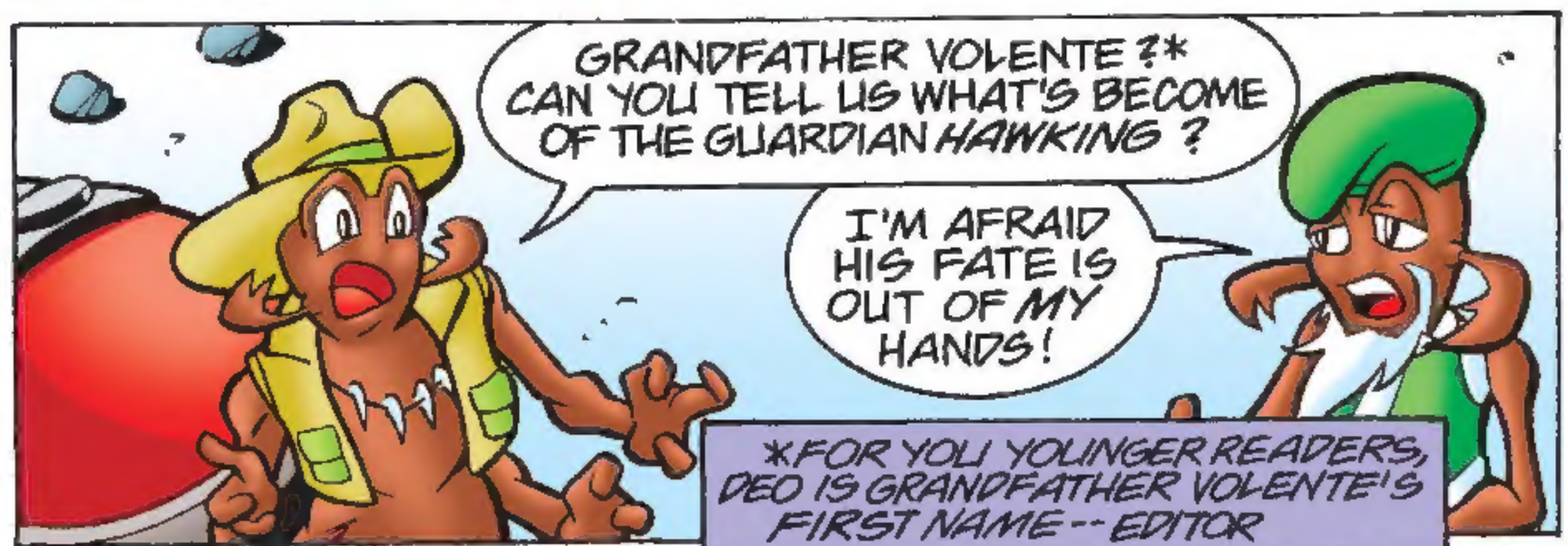

WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE, STRYKER?
LOOKS LIKE A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME TO ME-- FOR ALL OF US!
I THINK WE'LL GO OUT AND LOOK AROUND--

--THEN WE'LL SPEAK!
I DOUBT EITHER SIDE WAS A WINNER TODAY!
FOR ONCE--

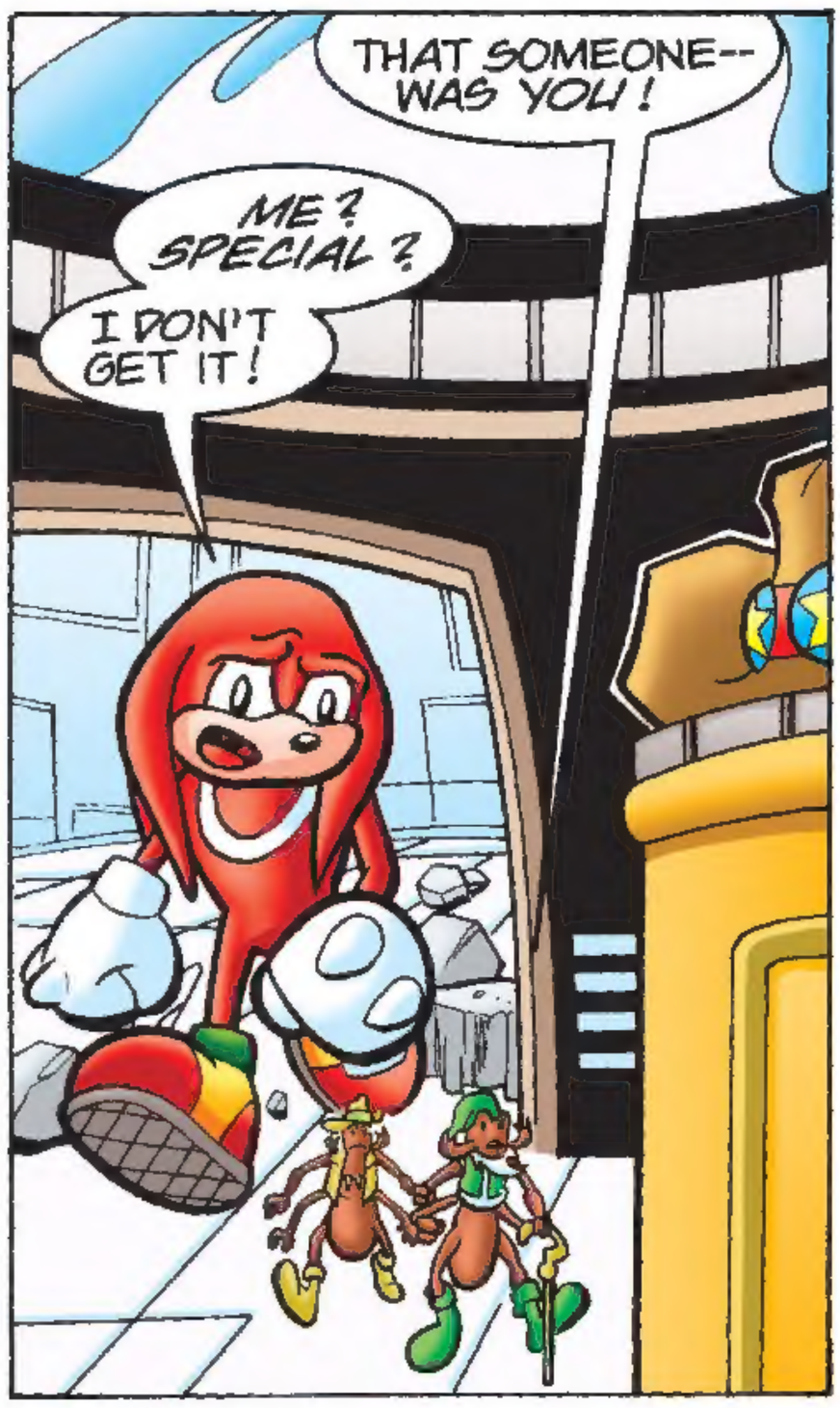

--I COULDN'T AGREE MORE.
AT LEAST ECHIDNAOPOLIS IS STANDING!

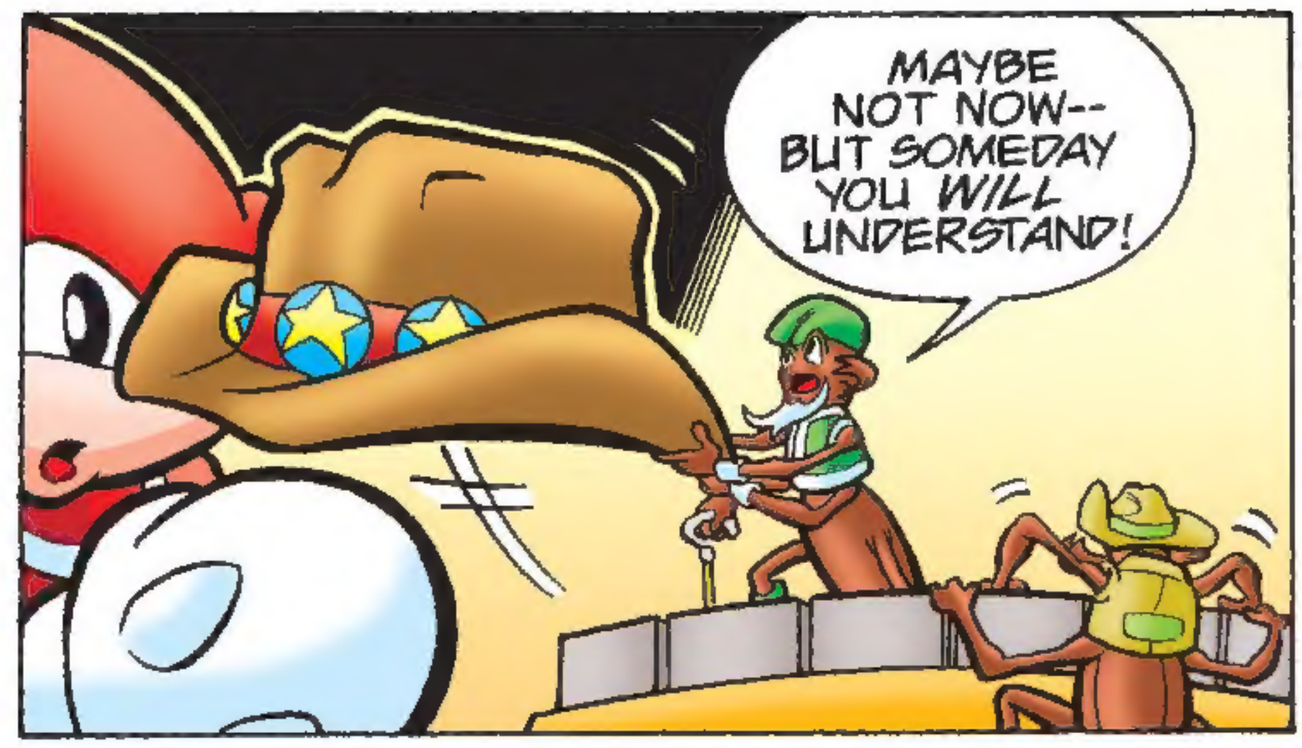

THERE'S CATWEAZLE OVER-HEAD! WE MUST BE ON THE FLOATING ISLAND!
THAT MUST MEAN--
ARCHY! WE HAVE TO CHECK ON GRANDFATHER HAWKING!

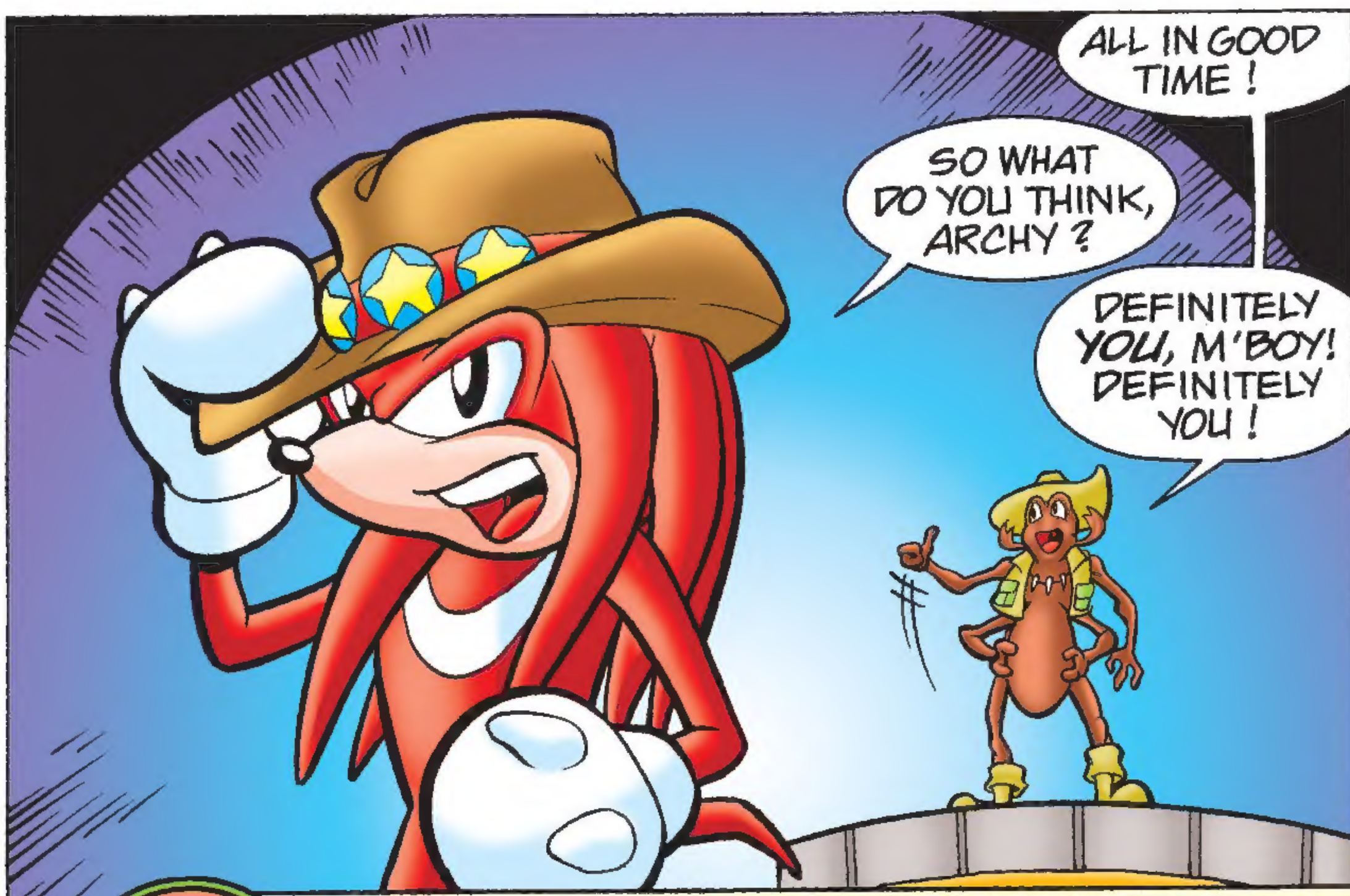
WHAT A MESS! DO YOU THINK--?
BAMF!
I BELIEVE THERE'S SOMEONE HERE WHO CAN HELP US!


GRANDFATHER VOLENTE?* CAN YOU TELL US WHAT'S BECOME OF THE GUARDIAN HAWKING?
I'M AFRAID HIS FATE IS OUT OF MY HANDS!
*FOR YOU YOUNGER READERS, DEO IS GRANDFATHER VOLENTE'S FIRST NAME -- EDITOR

HOWEVER, THERE IS SOMETHING YOUR GRANDFATHER WANTED YOU TO HAVE, KNUCKLES!
HE'D BEEN SAVING IT FOR SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL!







NEXT: THE RETURN OF **ENERJAK**, ALONG WITH **The Dark Legion!**

THE DINGOES SETTLE IN ECHIDNAOPOLIS! MORE SECRETS OF HAVEN! PLUS LARA-LE, JULIE-SU, ARCHIMEDES AND CHAOTIX, OHYEAH, WE THREW IN KNUCKLES AS A BONUS! BE HERE!